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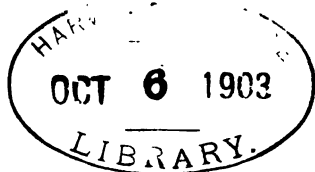
THE
ESSENTIALS
OF
PROSE COMPOSITION

BY
JAMES MORGAN HART
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN CORNELL UNIVERSITY



PHILADELPHIA:
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Prof. B.S. Hurlbut.

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PREFACE.

THE first three chapters of this book are in the main a reproduction of the lectures delivered to the Freshman class in Cornell University during a number of years. Chapters IV. and V. have been taken, in outline, from the author's *Handbook*, but with very many alterations and additions; practically they have been rewritten. Chapter VI. is entirely new; it may be said to represent the Cornell experience and views, not only of myself, but also—and chiefly—of the instructors in charge of a Freshman class of nearly two hundred and fifty students.

In the preparation of this book my steadfast aim has been to offer something practical, simple, and inexpensive, something adapted to the needs of young persons between the ages of sixteen and twenty. This book is not too difficult for the upper classes of any good high school; in an incomplete edition it has, in fact, been already tested in the classes of one such high school. Nor is it too elementary for the lower classes of a college. It represents, unless I am greatly mistaken, those working principles which the young, in their formative period, between sixteen and twenty, most need in acquiring the gift of correct and easy expression. It embodies the *essentials* of good every-day prose.

I am prepared to admit unhesitatingly, of course, that no two minds will agree entirely upon the essentials of any subject. The value of every book like the present will depend in great measure upon the experience and position of the writer. What, then, are the qualifications of the present writer?

For twelve years I have been the responsible head of an English department which now numbers two assistant professors, four instructors, one assistant, and nearly six hundred students. Of the students, over five hundred are in courses

which are exclusively or in good part courses in writing. With all this writing I am more or less acquainted, certainly to the extent of recognizing blunders and idiosyncrasies in every course, from English 1 to English 16. Further, having given regular instruction to more than one class in the Ithaca High School and read many of their papers, I am familiar with the practical workings of the school system. Besides, at the request of the Regents of the State of New York, I have read not a few of their papers on appeal. Lastly, in the matter of entrance examination, I have read hundreds of entrance papers and also hundreds of school papers submitted for exemption from our *A*-list. The writers represented every kind of preparatory school in nearly every State of the Union.

This book, accordingly, is only a strenuous effort on my part to *image*, see p. 175, the "English question" and discover the most practicable solution.

Stress, it will be observed, is laid upon the Sentence; next, upon Composition-Draughting. The Paragraph, though assuredly not neglected, is subordinated more thoroughly than in other text-books to the Composition as a whole. In this respect the present book represents a slight reaction from the ultra Paragraph-Doctrine which prevailed a few years ago. Concerning the Sentence I wish to be perfectly frank. The Sentence is *the unit of thinking*; yet in the entire domain of education it is the field *most neglected*. College professors complain of the student's inability to think in the direction of natural science, political economy, history, philosophy, and so forth. When closely analyzed, this inability reveals itself as the inability to measure accurately the relations of phrases and clauses to the sentence as an individual proposition. The loose thinker is loose because he is a loose writer, and vice versa. For him the sentence has no *ratio*; he is the embodiment of the illogical *post hoc propter hoc*. The reader will find abundant illustration in the warning examples here cited, especially those in §§ 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 30, 36, 37, 38, 39.

Some critics will doubtless ask: Why is there nothing upon

Diction, the choice and use of words? Is not Diction an essential of all writing? Certainly it is an essential, perhaps the essential, of good writing; for words are the very life-blood of expression. The good writer is known by his words. Unfortunately, diction cannot be taught by any manual such as the present. Where should one begin, where should one end, what system should one follow in teaching the choice of words? The proper structure of writing, the putting together of words and phrases, can be taught and ought to be required of every educated person; this work is an attempt to teach structure. But diction is beyond the powers of any single book or teacher. Shall we begin with the difference between "expect" and "suspect," "affect" and "effect," and rest from our labors with the denunciation of such brutalities as "a combine," "an invite," "a recommend"? We shall be wiser if we recognize the fact that English diction means the English language, and the other fact that to know the English language one must know its literature. Our colleges now prescribe the reading of certain English classics in preparation for college. If that preparation is to be genuine, assuredly it must teach English diction. I can think of no better method.

On the other hand, the reader will please bear in mind that Sentence-Structure, Paragraphing, Composition-Draughting, though they may not teach Diction directly, nevertheless promote it indirectly, by cultivating the habit of discriminating. The person who is taught to forecast his treatment of the subject and construct proper sentences will inevitably be led, consciously or unconsciously, to weigh his words. The incompatibility between close thinking and loose or vulgar wording is inherent.

It may not be amiss to repeat here the explanation given at page 24: examples printed with an * prefixed have been taken from school and college papers. They are merely a few out of hundreds collected in the last three or four years. They will serve to illustrate present tendencies.

J. M. HART.

Cornell University, May, 1902.

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THE ESSENTIALS OF PROSE COMPOSITION.

CHAPTER I.

FORMS OF THE SENTENCE.

1. Definition.—What is a sentence? No thoroughly satisfactory definition is possible; all the definitions are merely approximations to the truth. For example, the following definition, which is as good as any:

A sentence is such an assemblage of words as will make complete sense.

What is an assemblage of words? "Yes," "No," "Indeed," the ejaculations "O," "Oh," "Ah," and other single words, are regarded and printed as sentences; yet a single word can scarcely pass for an "assemblage."

Further, what is meant by "making complete sense"? To know readily and surely when the sense is complete, requiring the period or other punctuation-sign equivalent to the period (mark of interrogation or of exclamation), one must be trained in composition. Now to one thus trained any definition of a sentence is superfluous.

Instead of attempting a definition, then, we shall do better to consider the following practical points:

1. For the purpose of training in the art of writing we are to restrict our attention to such sentences as do contain "an assemblage of words," that is, words enough to call for care in the arrangement of them.

2. The sense is "complete" when any addition or omission, even of a single word, would either change the nature of the thought or give to it a different direction.

3. By "completeness" is here meant rhetorical completeness, not mere grammatical completeness. The distinction cannot be defined; it can, however, be illustrated. For example :

We came to our journey's end || at last, || with no small difficulty, || after much fatigue, || through deep roads || and bad weather.

The grammarian assures us that we might break off at any one of the points marked || and still have a complete sentence. True; yet such completeness would be only *grammatical*; whereas the rhetorician asserts that all the phrases cut off by || are necessary to the *rhetorical* completeness, for they are all intended by the writer to heighten the reader's impression of the discomfort of the journey. In truth, the sentence is a genuine unit; the unity is merely obscured by awkward arrangement. This awkwardness corrected, the unity becomes evident :

At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads and bad weather, we came, with no small difficulty, to our journey's end.

See the remarks on the Periodic Sentence, § 32.

4. The chief difficulty for the young is to perceive, on the one hand, when they have expressed the thought completely; on the other hand, when they are changing its nature or giving to it a new direction. The root of the evil is twofold. The young are not trained enough at school in writing sentences and are not corrected thoroughly for their faults in sentence-structure. Further, they are not trained enough in *correct speech*. They are suffered to utter almost any form of words from which the hearer can guess or puzzle out a meaning. Scarcely one student in the hundred is taught to *speak* well-constructed sentences of a dozen or fifteen words. Hence it is only natural that the young, when set to write, should compose sentences as they speak, namely, at random.

2. Forms in General.—Sentences are classified by grammarians into simple, compound, and complex. This grammatical classification is of little or no service in composing. It will not aid the beginner in making his expression clear, or forcible, or easy.

The following classification, purely rhetorical, will be more serviceable :

- I. The Sentence of Unconditioned Statement.
- II. The Sentence of Conditioned Statement.
- III. The Sentence of Balanced Statement.

UNCONDITIONED STATEMENT.

3. Fundamental Structure; Varieties.—The sentence of unconditioned statement may be a direct command (wish) or question, or it may be a direct assertion. The direct command seldom occasions difficulty. Something in the very nature of an order ensures its being expressed with conciseness and precision. The direct question is practically a direct assertion in inverted order of subject and verb. For example :

He has come. Has he come ?

Consequently we may with safety concentrate our study upon the direct assertion.

What is involved in a sentence of direct assertion ? In strictness, only two things are essential : a subject and a verb. The verb may be either a verb of action, or the verb "to be" with a predicate noun or adjective. With the verb "to be" we may place also the verbs which express existence, appearance, or sensation. Thus, the two words, "He went," are a sentence. Also the three words: "He was tired," "He felt sleepy," or the four words: "He was an orphan," "The apple tastes sweet."

Such simple forms present, of course, no difficulty. Most sentences, however, are more developed, and therefore more complicated. In general, the difficulty increases with the complication. To enumerate and classify all the developed

forms would be impossible. It will suffice to examine the commoner and more representative varieties.

a. The subject, the verb, the predicate, is expanded.

The boy and his brother went.

The boy went and returned.

The boy was tired and hungry.

That stone building is both fortress and prison.

b. The verb has a direct object, an indirect object.

The boy saw his brother.

The boy gave the book to his brother.

c. The subject, or the object, is described or modified.

The angry boy struck his brother.

The boy struck his unresisting brother.

He saw the books on the table.

The description may be given in the form of a relative clause or a participial phrase :

The boy, who was now angry, struck his brother.

He saw the books lying (which were lying) on the table.

d. The verbal action is modified by some adverbial expression of time, place, manner, instrument.

The boy went yesterday.

The child ran up and down.

The children spoke too loudly.

The boy struck his brother with a stick.

In the following sentence,

The boy struck his brother in the street.

the phrase "in the street" is a genuine adverbial expression of place and modifies the verb. But in the sentence :

The boy struck his brother in the face.

"in the face" is not an adverbial expression of place, and does not modify the verb ; it is rather a phrase describing the object "brother." The fundamental meaning would be the same were the sentence worded :

The boy struck his brother's face.

The sentence belongs under *c.*

e. The verb (of the main sentence) has for its object a subordinate sentence, the so-called direct or indirect quotation.

He said to them : "You have come too late" (direct).

He said to them that they had come too late (indirect).

In the example just given the subordinate sentence is one of unconditioned statement. In the following :

The teacher said to his scholars : "If you are diligent you shall get a half holiday."

The teacher said to his scholars that if they were diligent they should get a half holiday.

the subordinate sentence is one of conditioned statement. See § 5.

Your friend says to you, "But how do you know that?" You at once reply, "Oh, because I have tried them over and over again and have always found them to be so."—HUXLEY.

f. Appended to the main sentence is a dependent clause or sentence, expressing the motive or purpose of the action of the verb in the main sentence.

Hester looked, by way of humoring the child.—HAWTHORNE.

I say this (in order) to put you on your guard.

He feigned great surprise (to the end) that he might the better conceal his exultation.

The able and experienced ministers of the republic, mortal enemies of his name, came every day to pay their feigned civilities to him and to observe the progress of his mind.—MACAULAY.

In the following we find appended, as expression of purpose, a subordinate sentence of conditioned statement :

Now, in this supposititious case, I have taken phenomena of a very common kind, in order that you might see what are the different steps in an ordinary process of reasoning, if you will only take the trouble to analyze it carefully.—HUXLEY.

g. Somewhat similar to f, yet different, is the following construction :

I am greatly surprised that you should have made so grave a blunder.

Here the dependent sentence beginning with "that" expresses the cause or origin of the surprise. The general

thought is not essentially different from that of the simple assertion :

Your grave blunder surprises me greatly.

or, in the passive voice :

I am greatly surprised by (at) your grave blunder.

or, the dependent statement turned into a nominative :

That you should have made such a grave blunder surprises me greatly.

To the grammarian, "That you should have made such a grave blunder" and "Your grave blunder" have the same value ; they are both nominative to the main verb "surprises."

h. Quite different from *a* is the construction which may perhaps be called composite ; it consists of one long sentence combining several co-ordinate sentences, each of which has its own subject and verb. For example :

The streets of the old capital are sad and silent, the bells ring no more, the carriages slacken their pace.—DAUDET.

Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses.—DE QUINCEY.

Nature had largely endowed William with the qualities of a great ruler ; and education had developed those qualities in no common degree.—MACAULAY.

Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part ? —THACKERAY.

. . . and by noon perhaps there is a haze lying along the hills and meadows, the distant valleys look gray and warm in the sunlight, the mountains beyond them are faintly blue, the sky itself looks yellow or rosy.—J. C. VAN DYKE.

A slight variation may be noted in the following :

The little Dauphin is ill ; the little Dauphin is dying.—DAUDET.

The moments were numbered ; the strife was finished ; the vision was closed.—DE QUINCEY.

In all these composite constructions there is a principle of unity. Each one of the co-ordinate statements helps in carrying on a joint movement or combines to make a single picture.

4. Specimens of Unconditioned Statement.

1. The subject is expanded by being defined in several clauses.

The convenience of being able to make appointments in any part of the town, and of being able to pass evenings socially at a very small charge, was so great that the fashion spread fast.—MACAULAY.

The subject is a group of words or phrases.

The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull.—DE QUINCEY.

A very short expansion :

Dust and moisture, too, are rising.—VAN DYKE.

2. The subject of the principal sentence is itself a sentence, or very nearly a sentence.

What it is that constitutes the look of a gentleman is more easily felt than described.—HAZLITT.

Whether you go or stay does not matter.

That he wrote this is evident.

Or the subject of the principal sentence may be explained in a subordinate sentence of definition :

The belief that Junius was Sir Philip Francis is now losing ground.

That our grandfathers shared in the prejudices of their day is all that makes them human to us ; and that nevertheless they could act bravely and wisely on occasion makes them only the more venerable.—LOWELL.

In the following the subject of "is" is a partial sentence, and the predicate "this" is followed by a long sentence of apposition, equivalent to a definition :

What I do say, and what common sense teaches, and what all history teaches, is this, that you cannot have one executive power and two real parliaments, two parliaments possessing such powers as the parliaments of this country have possessed ever since the revolution, two parliaments to the deliberate sense of which the sovereign must conform.—MACAULAY.

3. The verb is expanded.

Her white and delicate fingers dance madly upon the yellowed ivory, then sweep gravely over the keys of ebony, and recommence to flutter distractedly hither and thither.—AURIOL.

He . . . saw to the spelling, cleaned up the slovenly sentences, and gave the lax maudlin slipslop a sort of consistency.—THACKERAY.

The botanist has classed, ordered, sectioned, and specied the different trees, and christened each with a Latinized name.—J. C. VAN DYKE.

4. The object of the verb is expanded.

What do you see? A large open fireplace, with rusty dogs in it, and a bare-boarded floor; at the far end fleeces of wool stacked up; in the middle of the floor some empty corn-bags.—GEORGE ELIOT.

His name at once calls up before us a slender and feeble frame, a lofty and ample forehead, a nose curved like the beak of an eagle, an eye rivaling that of the eagle in brightness and keenness, a thoughtful and somewhat sullen brow, a firm and somewhat peevish mouth, a cheek pale, thin, and deeply furrowed by sickness and by care.—MACAULAY.

5. The subject of the sentence is an infinitive clause.

To bow to him [Dryden], and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry, was thought a privilege.—MACAULAY.

To lose a volume to C. [oleridge] carries some sense and meaning in it.—LAMB.

In the following the sentence is inverted, the infinitive clause as subject coming at the end; the "it" being grammatically pleonastic:

It is, however, as undesirable as it is impossible to try to feed the minds of children only upon facts of observation or record.—C. W. ELIOT.

The infinitive clause is the predicate of the sentence.

The dictate of humanity is without doubt to take a child from an unfaithful parent and give it the training most likely to lead to an honest and industrious life.—D. D. FIELD.

The object of the principal verb is also subject of an infinitive (accusative with infinitive).

Perhaps I shall hear a solitary loon laugh as he dives and plumes himself.—THOREAU.

He sees the stone gargoyles disgorge the water of the slates into the confused abysm of galleries, etc.—LOUIS BERTRAND.

6. The sentence contains a comparison, found usually in the predicate.

Let him be careful not to show himself so thin-skinned as to mind either [the spoils-politician or the unjust critic]; let him fight his way forward, paying only so much regard to both as is necessary to enable him to win in spite of them.—ROOSEVELT.

His personal tastes were those rather of a warrior than of a statesman ; but he, like his great-grandfather, the silent prince who founded the Batavian commonwealth, occupies a far higher place among statesmen than among warriors.—MACAULAY.

Still he is poet and philosopher even more than orator.—THACKERAY.

To be accurate on this head is not less my intention than it is my interest.—CURRAN.

7. The predicate is followed by a dependent sentence defining the idea of the predicate.

I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing.—THOREAU.

Whereupon your friend, unless he is a very unreasonable man, agrees with you and is convinced that you are quite right in the conclusion you have drawn.—HUXLEY.

8. A dependent sentence is the direct object of the verb in the main sentence.

A person observing the occurrence of certain facts and phenomena asks, naturally enough, what process, what kind of operation known to occur in Nature, applied to the particular case, will unravel and explain the mystery.—HUXLEY.

In all cases, you see that the value of the result depends on the patience and faithfulness with which the investigator applies to his hypothesis every kind of verification.—HUXLEY.

Frequently a dependent sentence is in apposition with some part of the main sentence.

There are two great defects in the working of the English theory that a gentleman must never, under any circumstances, have worked with his hands.—T. W. HIGGINSON.

Sometimes the dependent sentence is in the form of a direct quotation.

And, by the help of further reasoning, . . . you arrive at your final determination : " I will not have that apple."—HUXLEY.

CONDITIONED STATEMENT.

5. **Definition ; Fundamental Structure.**—The term "condition" is used here with a wide range of meaning. It includes not only the condition proper, usually expressed by "if," but also the relation of cause and effect, chronological

dependence, concession, comparison, and still other modes of dependence, for which there are no apt terms of designation, but which can be felt and estimated. For example :

If it rains to-morrow, we shall stay at home.

When I had finished reading, I went out for a walk.

Discovering that they had taken the wrong path, they retraced their steps.

However diligent he may be, he will scarcely win the prize.

Though highly gifted, he has not sufficient application.

The fundamental principle in all such constructions is that the complete sentence consists of two *members*, each of which is almost a complete sentence. The two members together make up the sentence-unit, and the dependence of one member on the other is the sentence-thought.

Each member has the fundamental structure of the unconditioned statement, that is, it has subject and verb, and may have also object (direct, indirect), adverbial modifiers, etc. Consequently each member must be constructed according to the principles which govern the unconditioned statement. On the other hand, the two members must be so adjusted to each other that the relation of dependence shall be expressed unmistakably. Herein lies the difficulty peculiar to this structure of sentence.¹

6. Specimens of Conditioned Statement.

1. *Condition proper ; hypothesis.*

If Hamlet could have stopped there, he would have been a Greek.
—JEBB.

If any general rule could be laid down for marking these limits, it would be this, that the state should not invade one man's rights in order to protect another's.—D. D. FIELD.

If he [Swift] was the husband of Stella, his conduct to Miss Vanhomrigh admits of no defence—it was unmanly and dishonorable. If he was

¹ This doctrine of sentence-*members*, though not incompatible with the *clause*-theory of the ordinary English grammar, for example, Whitney, *Essentials*, chap. xiv., pursues a different object. However useful for grammatical analysis it may be to classify various conditioning statements as clauses, the process does not help any one to write well. Whereas the object of the method here set forth is to enforce unity and clearness of sentence-structure, the foundation of correct writing.

not married to Stella, the fate of her rival leaves no stain on his memory.
—J. C. COLLINS.

The difference of meaning between the first two sentences just quoted and the third is all-important. All three are conditioned statements. In the first two, however, the condition marked by "if" is called technically a "rejected condition," *i. e.*, it is denied as a possibility and treated as a mere question for speculation. In the first sentence, Jebb implies that Hamlet *was unable* to stop there; in the second, Field implies that no *general rule can be* laid down. In the third sentence, on the other hand, the *possibility* of Swift's secret marriage to Stella is not rejected by any one. Some biographers of Swift have believed it, others have not; Collins disbelieves it. He attempts merely to put before the reader an alternative. Either Swift *was* married, then his conduct was inexcusable; or, he *was not* married, then his conduct was excusable.

Sentences like the third are, for past events, what the following sentence is for the future:

If it rains, I shall not come.

That is, I don't know whether it is going to rain or not. It may rain; in that case I stay at home. Whereas:

If he were here, he would help us.

is a rejected condition, a mere speculation. He is not here, and cannot be here, and we know it; consequently we must do without his help.

In the following the hypothetical member is without any "if" or other formal word; the hypothesis is suggested by the inverted word-order:

Had the trial been postponed, he might have been able to attend.—CURRAN.

Had they [these changes] taken place, not France, but England, would have had the honour of leading up the death-dance of democratic revolution.—BURKE.

Were I to stop here, I should fail utterly.

In the following sentences the usual order of members is inverted:

But that better kind of teacher and that larger expenditure are imperatively called for, if democratic institutions are to prosper and to promote continually the real welfare of the mass of the people.—C. W. ELIOT.

The aim of the article is attained, if it has helped to impress upon the reader this lesson, partly social and partly political: Take care of the children and the men and women will take care of themselves.—D. D. FIELD.

Calling the order in which the conditioning member¹ comes first the normal order, we may say that the inverted order is generally due to a desire on the writer's part to fit the sentence into its surroundings in the paragraph or to give to the sentence a peculiar emphasis. This question is best discussed in connection with the relation of the sentence to the paragraph. See §§ 31, 48.

Other modes of marking hypothesis :

Suppose—no extravagant supposition—that George III. had not recovered, that the rest of his long life had been passed in seclusion, Great Britain and Ireland would then have been, during thirty-two years, as completely separated as Great Britain and Spain.—MACAULAY.

Given the masses and distances of the planets, we can infer the perturbations consequent on their mutual attractions.—TYNDALL.

Multiplying all our powers by millions of millions, we do not reach the sun's expenditure.—TYNDALL.

In the last sentence, "multiplying" has the force of "if we multiply."

Provided it is consistent with the laws of thought, there is nothing that we may not have to accept as a probable hypothesis.—JEVONS.

Whether he works within or without party lines, he can surely find plenty of men who are desirous of good government, etc.—ROOSEVELT.

Here the member beginning with "whether" is merely another form of saying :

If he will only work somewhere, either within the party or outside of it, he can, etc.

We should note, however, that "if" does not always make the *entire sentence* one of conditioned statement ; in other

¹ By grammarians the conditioning member is called protasis ; the consequent member, or conclusion, is called apodosis.

words, an "if" may introduce a mere *phrase* of hypothesis. For example :

But it is only right to say that those who have judged him [Swift] thus harshly have proceeded on an assumption which would, if correct, have greatly modified this view of the question.—J. C. COLLINS.

Plato especially . . . treats maritime communication, if pushed beyond the narrowest limits, as fatal to the success and permanence of any wise scheme of education.—GROTE.

On the other hand, a sentence really conditioned throughout may not make perfectly plain at the first glance the precise consequence conditioned upon the "if." For example :

If he should hear this, I do not know what he would do.

Here the consequence of the "if he should hear" is not the expression "I do not know," but something quite different. The meaning of the whole sentence is rather :

If he should hear this, he would do something, I know not what.

2. *Cause and Effect*.—Under this head are here treated also the logical process of drawing a conclusion from a premise and the process of letting one action grow out of another.

As the Constitution now stands, it is conceded that you cannot put any unapportioned tax upon real estate.—J. H. CHOATE.

Since, as has been seen, Oratory was for the Greeks a fine art, it follows that Greek Oratory must have, after its own kind, that same typical character which belongs to Greek Sculpture and to Greek Tragedy.—JEBB.

Since it made no difference to anybody else that Whittier had been in youth a farmer's boy in summer and a shoemaker in winter, it made no difference to him.—T. W. HIGGINSON.

Ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists.—CARLYLE.

Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth.—CARLYLE.

Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favorites became fierce and ravenous.—BURKE.

The men of property in France, confiding in a force which seemed irresistible, . . . neglected to prepare for a conflict with their enemies at their own weapons.—BURKE.

Anxious [desirous?] to see the sport, I galloped forward and, entering a passage in the side of the mountain, ascended among the loose rocks as far as my horse could carry me.—PARKMAN.

3. *Chronological dependence*, sometimes with a suggestion of cause and effect.

As soon as the easy use of what I have called the tools of education is acquired, and even while this familiarity is being gained, the capacity for productiveness and enjoyment should begin to be trained through the progressive acquisition of an elementary knowledge of the external world.—C. W. ELIOT.

But as soon as you examine those cases you will see either that they bear no analogy to the case with which we have to deal, or that they corroborate my argument.—MACAULAY.

Looking back to those days of old, ere the gate shut to behind me, I can see now that to children with a proper equipment of parents these things would have worn a different aspect.—KENNETH GRAHAME.

Wherever this power and facility appear, we recognize the look and deportment of the gentleman.—HAZLITT.

Not long after the story was first circulated, he set to work to ascertain, if possible, the truth.—J. C. COLLINS.

When I took leave of Shaw at La Bonté's camp, I promised to meet him at Fort Laramie on the first of August.—PARKMAN.

They were close under the stern, before the guard on deck was aware of their approach.—IRVING.

And by the time I had got all this done, and had made my pack and bound it on the pack-saddle, the day was tiptoe on the threshold of the east.—R. L. STEVENSON.

While I was thus desperately tacking through the bog, children and cattle began to disperse, until only a pair of girls remained behind.—R. L. STEVENSON.

4. *Comparison.*

The farther we pursue this subject, the more its interest and its wonder grow upon us.—TYNDALL.

What these animals [one excessively small, the other excessively large] are to the eye, a very short or a very long action would be to the memory. The first would be, as it were, lost and swallowed up by it, and the other difficult to be contained in it.—ADDISON.

He [Flaubert] loathed the smug face of facility as much as he suffered from the nightmare of toil.—HENRY JAMES.

5. *Contrast.*—The contrast may be formally marked by certain words (connectives); or it may be in the thought alone.

Abundance of rain falls during the autumnal and winter months, little or none during the summer.—GROTE.

Fresh from the flattery of her courtiers, she [Elizabeth] would tolerate no flattery in the closet.—J. R. GREEN.

If political necessities made her life a lonely one, she [Elizabeth] had at any rate the satisfaction of averting war and conspiracies by love sonnets and romantic interviews, or of gaining a year of tranquillity by the dexterous spinning out of a flirtation.—J. R. GREEN.

Here "if" is not the ordinary "if" of hypothesis; it has rather the force of "though."

Ignoble, inexpressibly wearisome as the Queen's diplomacy seems to us now, tracing it as we do through a thousand despatches, it succeeded in its main end. It gained time. . . .—J. R. GREEN.

Here the first "as" does not express comparison, but has the force of "though." See § 38.

However much he transcended the prevailing conception of his order, . . . he might be regarded as pretty fairly representing that order.—DE QUINCEY.

Do what he will, however, the critic will still remain exposed to frequent misunderstandings.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The personages of the tale—though they give themselves out to be of ancient stability and considerable prominence—are really of the author's own making, or at all events, of his own mixing.—HAWTHORNE.

Several of the sentences quoted above might also be called sentences of concession; the writer concedes up to a certain point, then stops, and—going round—presents the subject from a different side. For example:

Although in one sense we are passive portions of the universe, in another we show a curious autonomy, as if we were small active centres on our own account.—WILLIAM JAMES.

6. *Chronological suspense*, with a suggestion of hypothesis.

Till they have done so, let us decline to charge Swift with mendacity and hypocrisy.—J. C. COLLINS.

Here the "till" implies that Swift's detractors have not yet proved their charges and probably never will.

Usually, however, "till" (or "until") does not indicate a hypothetical statement, but merely measures the time of one action by the time of another. For example:

Please leave the little chapel for the moment, and walk down the nave, till you come to two sepulchral slabs near the west end, and then look about you, etc.—*RUSKIN*.

He had been apprehensive that the enemy would avoid a decisive action and would protract the war till the autumnal rains should return with pestilence in their train.—*MACAULAY*.

The following is an excellent specimen of a long and complicated sentence of conditioned statement. Though long and complicated, it is perfectly clear throughout ; each word, phrase, and clause is in the proper place, and the relation of each part to the whole is unmistakable :

Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes—not difficult, I think, to be traced—which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service at any given moment the practice of criticism either is or may be made to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.—*MATTHEW ARNOLD*.

BALANCED STATEMENT.

7. A balanced sentence is one in which the several members run parallel, resembling one another in grammatical structure and in word-order ; the effect of the whole is to give peculiar point to a comparison or a contrast. For example :

Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakespeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers.—*MACAULAY*.

But, my lord, you may quit the field of business, though not the field of danger ; and, though you cannot be safe, you may cease to be ridiculous.—*JUNIUS*.

They are still base enough to encourage the follies of your age, as they once did the vices of your youth.—*JUNIUS*.

Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow.—*POPE*.

In peace, children bury their parents ; in war, parents bury their children.—*Z*.

Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid, Pope is always smooth, uniform, and level. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities,

and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation ; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe and levelled by the roller.—JOHNSON.

We were ten or twelve millions of people, spread over almost half a world. We were more than twenty States, some stretching along the same seaboard, some along the same line of inland frontier, and others on opposite banks of the same vast rivers.—WEBSTER.

There was no blush, no tremulousness, which said, "I know you think me a pretty woman, too young to preach" ; no casting up or down of the eyelids, no compression of the lips, no attitude of the arms, that said, "But you must think of me as a saint."—GEORGE ELIOT.

More than the white hairs on his head were the sage thoughts in his mind.—HAWTHORNE.

Miss Baillie's play went off capitally here. We wept till our hearts were sore, and applauded till our hands were blistered.—SCOTT.

The passages quoted from Macaulay, Junius, George Eliot, and Hawthorne are the only ones which present a balanced sentence in the strict sense ; that is, a sentence in which one *member* is balanced against another, the balance constituting the syntactic union of the parts. In the passages from Pope, Z., Johnson, and Scott, we have independent sentences placed side by side, the contrast binding them together loosely, not syntactically. In the passage from Webster the balance exists only in the several *clauses* describing the predicate "States." This may be called clause-balance.

Examples of a conditioned sentence in which one member is in balanced structure are the following :

The Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator.—MACAULAY.

If you wish to enrich a person, study not to increase his stores but to diminish his desires.—Z.

The following are more nearly balanced sentences in the strict sense :

As persons have a difficulty in knowing their own characters, so has a writer in judging of his own compositions.—JOWETT.

It is in these matters as in the commonest affairs of practical life : the guess of the fool will be folly, while the guess of the wise man will be wisdom.—HUXLEY.

Law cannot prevent the envenomed arrow from being pointed at the

intended victim ; but it has given him a shield in the integrity of a jury.
—CURRAN.

Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple ; the other, full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is mild, that harsh. This is found by experience effectual for its purposes ; the other is a new project. This is universal ; the other calculated for certain Colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation ; the other remote, contingent, full of hazard.—BURKE.

Balanced sentences of a peculiar kind are frequent in the poetry and the proverbial writings of the Hebrews. For example :

A wise son maketh a glad father : but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.—*Prov.* x., 1.

Blessings are upon the head of the just : but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.—*Prov.* x., 6.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters.—*Ps.* xxiii., 2.

This peculiar Hebrew construction is called parallelism.

GENERAL REMARKS.

8. In the present chapter an attempt has been made to classify the several forms of the sentence ; also to illustrate the more usual varieties of each form. Many specimens have been taken from writers of acknowledged merit. The student is earnestly advised to cultivate the habit of examining for himself in like manner the sentence-structure of the English classics ; only by virtue of this habit can he hope to acquire familiarity with the essentials of expression. The sentence is, after all, the unit of written discourse. True, the unity and sequence of the paragraph are not to be neglected. And, indeed, certain features of sentence-structure can be taught only in connection with the paragraph. See §§ 45–52. Nevertheless, after making all due concessions to paragraph-writing, we must admit the fundamental truth that each individual sentence is the expression of an individual thought, and that this thought should be expressed in the most perfect form. A sense of perfect sentence-structure we can acquire only through

the most painstaking study of sentences as we find them in the best writers. Only after such study can we truthfully assert that we know what a sentence is.

In pursuing this study we need not expect to be always able to classify the exact variety of condition in a sentence of conditioned statement. Some sentences, like some figures of speech, will admit of classification under more than one head. The main point is to recognize the principle that one action *turns upon* another action, with a movement resembling that of a *hinge*. Bearing this broad principle in mind, the student should note the peculiar manner in which the individual writer makes his sentences turn. The close study of one hundred well-selected pages of the best prose will yield surprising results in training the student's mind insensibly in the habit of arranging his thoughts in conditioned form, instead of stringing them loosely together. See §§ 15-17, 36.

For the unconditioned sentence, the chief gain will consist in a clearer insight into the method of arranging phrases and clauses. The longer and more involved the sentence, the greater the art of disposing every word in the proper place. This art of arrangement is exceedingly slow of acquisition. Nothing but the example of the best writers can carry us very far on the road.

The balanced sentence is used sparingly by the best writers. Certain writers of the eighteenth century, notably Pope, Johnson, and Junius, used it to excess; in the nineteenth century Macaulay is somewhat free in the use of it. The balanced sentence is dangerous in two ways. First, it soon becomes monotonous; the eye and the mind of the reader weary of the pendulum-like swing. Secondly, and chiefly, it is dangerous to our habits of thought. Very few things resemble each other so nearly that we can safely balance one with the other in this formal manner. The variations are also to be taken into account. Yet the habitual writer of balanced sentences, in his eagerness to find things alike, overlooks the differences, and thus violates the truth. This will be evident

to any one who will study critically Johnson's long-drawn-out parallel between Dryden and Pope, from which an extract has been given in § 7. Johnson was so desirous of weighing his clauses and phrases that he forgot to weigh his facts.

Occasionally, perhaps, the student may be tempted to confound a balanced sentence with a conditioned sentence embodying a comparison. Yet the difference is obvious. In a conditioned sentence one member is *subordinate* to the other, hence dependent. In the balanced sentence the members are *co-ordinate*. No one is dependent on another. The thoughts and facts are all independent ; the writer merely puts them side by side by way of forcible illustration.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL PROPERTIES OF THE SENTENCE.

9. Introductory Remarks.—Every sentence should have four general properties: Unity, Clearness, Force, Ease. These four are best arranged in two groups: Unity and Clearness; Force and Ease. The two groups may then be compared. Unity and Clearness are the indispensable and invariable qualities; they constitute the logical side of the sentence. Without them, the sentence cannot in strictness be called a sentence; it is rather a loose collocation of words through which the reader struggles to get at the sense. Being indispensable and invariable, then, Unity and Clearness should be demanded of *every sentence of every writer*. It matters not whether the writer be a boy at school or an experienced author of valuable books. Every sentence, spoken, penned, or printed, should be an absolute unit, should be perfectly clear.

What is meant by Unity of the Sentence? The most satisfactory definition is that given by Professor A. S. Hill: ¹

A well constructed sentence contains one and but one leading thought, and presents it from one and but one point of view.

What is meant by Clearness? The only true definition was given eighteen hundred years ago by the Roman orator and teacher of oratory, Quintilian: "*Non ut intellegere possit, sed ne omnino possit non intellegere, curandum.*" This may be rendered, somewhat freely:

It is not enough to be understood; make sure that you cannot possibly be misunderstood.

¹ *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 270.

Force and Ease, on the other hand, are relative properties; relative, at least, in the sense that we cannot demand them from every one in the same measure. For example, Daniel Webster and Washington Irving, being good writers, exhibit in their sentence-structure all four properties: Unity and Clearness, Force and Ease. Unity and Clearness they have in equal measure; that is, all their sentences are units, all are clear. The exceptions are so few as almost to escape detection. But Force and Ease are not shared by Webster and Irving equally. Webster has a much larger measure of Force; Irving, of Ease. The explanation is obvious: Webster was a man of power, Irving was a man of grace; the sentence-structure of each represents the man himself.

In other words, the final measure of Force and Ease which the individual writer may put into his expression will depend upon his individual gifts. Nevertheless we have the right to demand of every writer, young or old, a certain moderate measure of Force and Ease. Approaching the question from the negative side, we must assert that every writer should be taught to avoid tameness and awkwardness. Tameness wearies the reader, awkwardness frets him.

UNITY.

10. In General.—In order to apply successfully Professor Hill's definition of Unity, we must bear in mind the several forms of sentence described in Chapter I.

a. In the sentence of unconditioned statement everything is subordinated to one *leading assertion*.

b. In the sentence of conditioned statement the governing thought is the *dependence of one member upon the other*.

c. In the balanced sentence the governing thought is the *parallelism or contrast* between two assertions.

Each one of these sentence-forms will be discussed at some length.

Unity in the Unconditioned Statement.

11. Specimens of Unity.—A few will suffice for illustration :

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best and indeed only suit of rusty black and arranging his looks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the schoolhouse.—IRVING.

Leading assertion : Spent half an hour at his toilet. The rest consists of the details of the toilet.

It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveller into a gulf of black, smothering mud.—IRVING.

Leading assertion : It was full of pits and quagmires.

One sunshiny morning, in the good old times of the town of Boston, a young carver in wood, well known by the name of Drowne, stood contemplating a large oaken log, which it was his purpose to convert into the figure-head of a vessel.—HAWTHORNE.

Assertion : A young carver stood contemplating a log.

Meantime, the purpose of the Governor, in disturbing the peace of the town, at a period when the slightest commotion might throw the country into a ferment, was almost the universal subject of inquiry, and variously explained.—HAWTHORNE.

Assertion : The purpose of the Governor was the subject of inquiry.

Every profession, not excepting the glorious one of a soldier, or the sacred one of a priest, is liable to its own particular vices.—BURKE.

The awful state of the time, and not myself, or my own justification, is my true object in what I now write ; or in what I shall ever write or say.—BURKE.

In the same year in which the "Drummer" was acted, and in which the first numbers of the *Freeholder* appeared, the estrangement of Pope and Addison became complete.—MACAULAY.

Of the Psalms, his [Addison's] favorite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a shepherd whose crook guides the flock safe, through gloomy and desolate glens, to meadows well watered and rich with herbage.—MACAULAY.

Assertion : His favorite psalm was the twenty-third ; the rest is description of the psalm.

12. Violation of Unity; General Faults.—We violate the principle of unity whenever we append to the leading assertion another assertion which cannot be truly subordinated. The remedy for such loose writing is to construct two independent sentences.

He [Tillotson] was exceedingly beloved both by King William and Queen Mary, who nominated Dr. Tennyson, bishop of London, to succeed him.

* During a short rest which Magua allowed his band, Hawkeye and his friends overtook them, and in a short fight all of the Hurons were killed except Magua, who escaped.¹

* The Indians, led by Magua, discovered their location, and a fight ensued, in which Gamut was wounded.

* The three men consented to act as their guides and conducted them to a cave in an island, where Magua and his friends attacked them.

He was exceedingly beloved both by King William and Queen Mary. They nominated Dr. Tennyson, bishop of London, to succeed him.

During a brief rest which Magua allowed his band, Hawkeye and his friends overtook them. In the fight which ensued all the Hurons except Magua were killed; he, however, escaped.

The Indians, led by Magua, discovered their hiding-place. A fight ensued, in which Gamut was wounded.

The three men consented to act as their guides and conducted them to a cave in an island; here Magua and his friends attacked them.

In the sentence quoted from Irving, § 11, “where the green surface,” *where* is correct, for it introduces a necessary description of the swamp. But, in the sentence just corrected, the attack upon the party in the cave is not an essential feature of the cave itself; the coming to the cave and the fight there are separate incidents.

In the following the unity is marred by the shifting of the point of view (see Hill’s definition, § 9) produced by the unnecessary change of the *grammatical subject*. This subject is (1) *Tradesmen*, (2) *Bribes*:

¹ All the examples hereafter printed with an * prefixed have been taken from school and college papers. The original is in the left-hand column, the correction in the right-hand.

But tradesmen . . . never care to indulge us in matters contrary to our true interest, which they always know better than ourselves, nor can any bribes corrupt them to go out of their way, whilst they are consulting our good in our own despite.—FIELDING.

But tradesmen . . . never care to indulge us in anything contrary to our true interest, which they always know better than ourselves, nor can they be bribed to go out of their way whilst they are consulting our good in our own despite.

Observe, also, the following:

* His sweetheart refused him [Marnier] and his betrayer married her.

His sweetheart jilted him and married his false friend.

In the following quotation the second sentence is faulty in making two assertions of equal grammatical and rhetorical value, instead of making one principal assertion and one subordinate. The first sentence is not clear. See § 21.

She [Elizabeth] accepted services such as were never rendered to any other English sovereign without a thought of return. Walsingham spent his fortune in saving her life and her throne, and she left him to die a beggar.—J. R. GREEN.

Services such as were never rendered to any other English sovereign she accepted without a thought of return. Walsingham, who spent his fortune in saving her life and her throne, she left to die a beggar.

The following is defective in unity, inasmuch as the grammatical subject does not mark the real subject. The writer is describing a girl seated on top of a loaded wagon and surrounded by objects of all sorts:

There was also a cat in a willow basket, from the partly opened lid of which she gazed with half-closed eyes, etc.

There was also a willow basket, from the partly opened lid of which a cat gazed with half-closed eyes, etc.

In the following the leading thought, the father's grief at his son's *present* dissipation, is obscured by the failure of the relative clause to mark the difference between past and present conduct:

The good old man soon grew weary of the gay life in the house of his son, who had taken high

The good old man soon grew weary of the gay life in the house of his son, who, though he had

honors at college and who spent much time and money in entertaining his friends.

taken high honors at college, now wasted much time and money in entertaining his friends.

The following is a specimen of newspaper English; one fails to see any connection between punting a football and entering a broker's office :

For two years he has coached our eleven and materially aided in bringing up the standard on the football field. He is one of the greatest punters in the country, and soon will enter his father's brokerage office in —.

He is one of the greatest punters in the country. For two years he has coached our eleven and aided materially in raising our standard of play. He is now to leave us and enter the office of his father, a broker in —.

In the following estimate of the present method of observing Decoration Day, the sentence as a whole has unity, but the descriptive relative clause beginning with "those who" is faulty :

* Indeed, it seems that outing pleasures take prominence over the duty we owe to those who fought to maintain the Union and by whose efforts and blood we now enjoy the principles so dearly bought.

Outing pleasures, it seems, now take precedence of our solemn duty to those who shed their blood to maintain the Union under which we live.

* Johnson spent a great deal of his time in ransacking the books of his father's library, from which he acquired a mass of miscellaneous knowledge.

Johnson spent a great deal of his time in ransacking the books of his father's library and acquiring from them a mass of miscellaneous knowledge.

* One of the most prominent traits of the American character is love of liberty. One explanation of this is that the Americans are descended for the most part from the English, and the independence of the English spirit is proverbial.

One of the most prominent traits of the American character is love of liberty. This is due in great measure to the fact that Americans are descended from the English, a race proverbial for their independence of spirit.

The following has altogether too much for one sentence; the end fails utterly to recall the beginning :

* The main cause for this state of affairs [lack of class-spirit] is

The chief responsibility for this state of affairs in our college rests

that in this college there are many fraternities which take men from all classes, and, being in this manner thrown together, the men forget their classes and a Freshman very often becomes the close friend of a Sophomore, of a Junior, or even perhaps of a Senior.

* The criticisms are generally very severe and I have received many discouraging set-backs throughout the course, more discouraging owing to the fact that I thought my work good.

with the many fraternities which admit men from all the classes. Being thus thrown together, the fraternity-members forget class-distinctions, to the extent that a Freshman very often becomes the close friend of a Sophomore, of a Junior, or even perhaps of a Senior.

The criticisms, which were usually very severe, have given me many a discouraging set-back, all the more discouraging because I thought my work good.

The following, taken from a writer of some reputation, is singularly awkward in mixing up, through the misuse of "and," a single fact with a general phenomenon :

Our bees are soon all back, and more with them, for we have touched the box here and there with the cork of a bottle of anise oil, and this fragrant and pungent oil will attract bees half a mile or more. When no flowers can be found, this is the quickest way to obtain a bee.

* But just a few lines more and he speaks of language as a machine.

The equinoctial storm occurred last Thursday, during which the lightning struck a tree near the schoolhouse.

She [Miss Raby] has a half dozen very small ones over whom she presides and teaches them in her simple way until they are big or learned enough to face the great schoolroom.

Soon our bees are all back, and more with them, for we have touched the box here and there with the cork of a bottle of anise oil. This fragrant and pungent oil will attract bees half a mile or more, and, when flowers are not to be had, is the most effective bait.

But, only a few lines farther down, he speaks of language as a machine.

During the equinoctial storm (which occurred) last Thursday the lightning struck a tree near the schoolhouse.

She presides over a half dozen very small ones, whom she teaches in her simple way until they are big enough or learned enough to face the great schoolroom.

The following, though not positively wrong, is unwieldy :

History is like the short space lighted up by a flickering taper in the midst of infinite glooms and mysteries, and its greatest events brief scenes in a vast drama of conflicting forces where the actors are passing in rapid succession, rising from and vanishing into the all-embracing darkness.

History is like the short space lighted up by a flickering taper in the midst of infinite glooms and mysteries ; its greatest events are brief scenes in a vast drama of conflicting forces where the actors, etc.

The following would be much better expressed in two sentences, one for the speaker, one for the sailor :

* I heard the tapping of a walking-stick along the hard-frozen road. I ran to the door to see who was passing ; a blind sailor called out to me and asked me to help him into the inn.

Hearing the tap of a walking-stick along the hard-frozen road, I ran to the door to see who was passing. A blind sailor called out to me and asked me to help him into the inn.

The following, from a critical review, is wholly lacking in unity of sentence-structure ; it is not even grammatical :

Mr. H——, to make things still more difficult for the reviewer, expresses a very low opinion of the value possessed by current criticism. He not only places the average critic in comparison with Matthew Arnold ; this of itself would be bad enough. Having thus given the modern pretender a *coup de grace*, Mr. H—— buries him completely by stating that “too much of what is now called criticism is the improvised chatter of a raw lad, portentously ignorant of the matter in hand.”

Not only does he place the average critic in comparison with Matthew Arnold,—this of itself would be bad enough,—but, having thus given the modern pretender the *coup de grace*, he buries him under the assertion that “too much,” etc.

13. Violation of Unity ; Relative Pronouns, Adverbs, etc.—In general the unity of the sentence is impaired, if not actually marred, by appending one relative clause or phrase to another. Even a single relative clause, unless it be one of

description (see §§ 11, 12), should often be reconstructed into an independent sentence.

* The class-work is very helpful, especially the daily writing of themes, which makes one learn to think quickly and express himself properly.

With these writings [Cicero's] young divines are more conversant than with those of Demosthenes, who by many degrees excelled the other, at least as an orator.

In common phrase, "these things regulate themselves," which means, of course, that God regulates them by his general laws.

In the following, the relative "which" is ambiguous:

Thus with her few notes does Nature ring the changes of the seasons; which we admire and, endeavoring to imitate, find but shadowy success.

As we rode to town we met a man who was talking to a little girl in a red sunbonnet, who was carrying a basket on her arm.

The class-room work is very helpful, especially the daily writing of themes; this makes one learn to think quickly and express one's self properly.

With these writings young divines are more conversant than with those of Demosthenes; yet Demosthenes, at least as an orator, excelled Cicero by many degrees.

In common phrase, "these things regulate themselves;" the phrase means, of course, that God regulates them by his general laws.

Thus with her few notes does Nature ring the changes of the seasons. We admire and try to imitate her, but with only shadowy success.

As we rode to town we met a man (who was) talking with a little girl; she wore a red sunbonnet and was carrying a basket on her arm.

The following not only falls short of perfect unity, but is awkward in the repetition of "whose":

As we walked through the beautiful streets whose sides were lined with maple trees whose leaves were just changing their color, we wondered whose taste had adorned the town.

As we walked through the beautiful streets and observed on each side the line of maple trees, the leaves of which were just changing their color, we wondered whose taste had adorned the town.

The following is very bad; it should be recast in three sentences:

The author is himself a representative of the older school of

The author is himself a representative of the older school of

Social Democrats, of *which* probably the best exponent in Germany is Liebknecht, *who* are characterized more by their bitter antagonism to the existing order of things than by a wise and carefully digested method of effecting a change, *which* is seemingly the ambition of the newer school.

Social Democrats. This school, of which the best exponent in Germany is probably Liebknecht, is characterized more by its bitter antagonism to the existing order of things than by a wise and carefully digested method of effecting a change. Such a method of change is seemingly the ambition of the newer school.

On the other hand, the unity of the sentence is not necessarily impaired by two or more relative clauses referring to the same antecedent.

The object of . . . that education in which man intervenes, and which I shall distinguish as artificial education, is to make good these defects in Nature's methods.—HUXLEY.

Still, even where the relative clauses refer to the same antecedent, the sentence as a whole may fail to present the leading thought from "but one point of view." For example :

He built on the brow of the hill a large stone house which cost twenty thousand dollars and which commanded a fine view of the surrounding country.

The chief merit of the house is the view from it ; the cost is quite subordinate. Yet view and cost are here made co-ordinate. The sentence can be truly unified only by subordinating the cost :

On the brow of the hill he built, for twenty thousand dollars, a large stone house which commanded a fine view of the surrounding country.

In general, the construction with "where" is as dangerous to unity as the construction with "which." Some specimens have been corrected already ; a few more are given here :

The vessel approached the shore and the passengers soon crowded into the boats and reached the beach in safety, where the inhabitants received them with kindness and provided them with shelter.

The vessel having approached the shore, the passengers soon crowded into the boats and reached the beach in safety. Here the inhabitants received them with kindness and provided them with shelter.

The following is a curious specimen of loose writing. In the first place, we cannot say that "To lean back in a reclining-chair and whirl away" *is* "a panorama of delight, a road full of surprises." Next, the concluding portion, "surprises, where," etc., is not so much a description of the surprises as an enumeration of them. Rigorous method would require period and capital: "These are," etc. Animated style, however, requires a different construction:

To lean back in a reclining-chair and whirl away in a breezy July day, past lakes, groves of oak, past fields of barley being reaped, past hay-fields, where the heavy grass is toppling before the swift sickle, is a panorama of delight, a road full of delicious surprises, where down a sudden vista lakes open, or a distant wooded hill looms darkly blue, or swift streams, foaming deep down the solid rock, send whiffs of cool breezes in at the window.

Leaning back in a reclining-chair, whirling away in a breezy July day past lakes, past groves of oak, past fields of barley being reaped, past hay-fields where the heavy grass is toppling before the swift sickle, one has a panorama of delight, a journey full of pleasant surprises: through a sudden vista lakes open, or a distant wooded hill looms darkly blue, or swift streams foaming deep down [at the foot of?] the solid rock send whiffs of cool breezes in at the window.

Unity in the Conditioned Statement.

14. General Remarks.—In the sentence of conditioned statement the problem is more complicated. Not only must each member be a unit, but the two members taken together must form a unit. The sentence as a whole must express the precise relation existing between the members. Whatever this relation may be, it should be obvious at a glance.

Further, since each member is a quasi-sentence, each member should have its own subject and its own verb, or verbal form.

If in one member no subject is expressed, the reader must infer that both members have the same subject. Neglect of this principle has led to many blunders; the most common of these is *the unrelated, or dangling, participle.*

For example, the following is perfectly correct :

Trudging along the street, he scrupled not to keep company with Phoebe, etc.—HAWTHORNE.

The subject of the first member is plainly the “he” of the second. In the following, however,

Leaving him [Quilp] to visions in which, perhaps, the quiet figures in the old church porch were not without their share, be it our task to rejoin them as they sat and watched.—DICKENS.

what is the subject of “leaving”? The subject of the second member is “task,” or “to rejoin”; neither of them will answer. The only subject which will answer is the “we” to be deduced from the possessive adjective “our.” Yet to write: “We leaving him to visions . . . , be it our task,” is not English idiom. Dickens would have constructed a much better sentence had he written :

Leaving him to visions . . . , *we will now* rejoin, etc.

Sometimes the subject of one member may not be the precise word or phrase needed to bring out the thought of the sentence as a whole. For example :

* Although we are apt to think of Macaulay merely as a writer, he was the ablest parliamentary debater of his time.

Thus worded, the sentence expresses a contrast between what we think of Macaulay and what Macaulay really was. Whereas the writer intended to express a distinction between that aspect of Macaulay which is most familiar and another aspect which is less familiar but not less important. The sentence may be recast :

Macaulay, although he is best known to us as a writer only, was the ablest parliamentary debater of his time.

Frequently the writer does not even perceive that one of his statements is conditioned upon the other ; he strings them together as if co-ordinate :

* The train left us at —, and we took a stage for the rest of the journey.

Leaving the train at —, we took a stage for the rest of the journey.

15. Dangling Participle.—This fault is to be detected occasionally in good writers; in untrained writers it is very common.

In discussing, therefore, the question of his [Swift's] supposed marriage, the point at issue is not, etc.

Taking, now, the tape-measure . . . and continuing the extension . . . to the distance of fifty feet, a spot was indicated, etc.—POE.

On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders.—IRVING.

* After presenting this side of the subject, the child should have an opportunity to write.

* Burke objects to the use of force, because, if we should fail in force we have no other resource, but failing in conciliation, force still remains.

In discussing, therefore, the question of his supposed marriage, we are to bear in mind that the point at issue is not, etc.

Taking, now, the tape-measure . . . and continuing the extension . . . to the distance of fifty feet, he marked a spot, etc.

When his coffers were searched, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders.

After this side of the subject has been presented [namely, by the teacher], the child should have an opportunity to write.

Burke objects to the use of force; for, if we should fail in force, we have no other resource, whereas if we fail in conciliation, force still remains.

Even after the "dangling participle" has been corrected, the last sentence as a whole is awkward.

* Mentioning this to my friend, he replied that, etc.

True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage . . . Retracing his steps, however, the wondrous features would again be seen, etc.—HAWTHORNE.

* Peering over, the white and lifeless form of Maude was seen on the rocks below.

* After being accused of stealing, his [Marner's] life seemed to change.

When I mentioned this to my friend, he answered, etc.

True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage . . . Retracing his steps, however, he would again see the wondrous features, etc.

Peering over, they saw the white and lifeless form of Maude on the rocks below.

After he had been accused of stealing, his life seemed to change.

It is hard to say upon what model Terence has formed his plays. Having no chorus, there is a pause in the representation at the end of every act.—LORD KAMES.

* The connectives are often omitted, giving the description a blunt, crisp effect.

While repairing our Aurora Street entrance, you will find our entrance on State Street.—ADV'T.

Being incapable of any bodily motion without external impulse, it was in vain to leave the ship, or to determine to do it, without the assistance of others.—FIELDING.

Lost in reverie, the hours slipped by.

While asleep, the Lilliputians discover him and bind him with numberless fine threads.

16. Failure to Perceive Condition.—Sometimes *the writer fails to realize that he is making a conditioned statement*; consequently he makes everything incoherent.

In the following quotation there are no less than four verbs having four distinct subjects; the reader's mind is hurried from one subject to another. To obtain the desired unity we need only reduce the number of subjects to one:

After the ship came to anchor, they put me ashore, where I was welcomed by my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness.

It is hard to say upon what model Terence has formed his plays. There is no chorus, yet there is a pause in the representation at the end of every act.

The frequent omission of connectives makes the description blunt and crisp. [The thought is really unconditioned.]

During the repair of our Aurora Street entrance customers will please use the entrance on State Street.

Having no power of locomotion, I could not leave the ship, I could not even resolve to leave it, without first securing the assistance of others.

While I was lost in reverie, the hours slipped by.

While he is asleep, the Lilliputians discover him and bind him with numberless fine threads.¹

Leaving the ship as soon as it had come to anchor, I was put ashore and received by my friends with the greatest kindness.

¹ Taken from A. S. Hill, *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 219. In strictness, "while asleep" is not a dangling *participle*; but it illustrates the dangling construction.

His peculiar attitude when studying was due to the fear that if he bent over his work the compression of his internal organs might increase their tendency to disease. And not only did he lay down rules for his physical regimen. A book of maxims which he drew up at West Point has been preserved, and we learn that his scrupulous exactness, his punctilious courtesy, and his choice of companions were the outcome of much deliberation.

His peculiar attitude when studying was due to the fear that if he bent over his work the compression of his internal organs might increase their tendency to disease. Not content with thus laying down rules for his physical regimen, he drew up also a book of maxims for regulating his conduct at West Point. From this book, which has been preserved, we learn, etc.

In the following the writer probably intended to draw a contrast between what was actually done and what might have been done had the streets been in proper condition :

The blaze originated from one of the ovens, and when Engine No. 13 was within six hundred feet of the place, streets were encountered that are in such deplorable condition that the engine sank in the mud to the axle and could not be budged. . . . So much time was lost by the firemen that the building is almost a total loss.

The blaze, which originated in one of the ovens, might have been promptly extinguished had the streets been in proper condition. They were so muddy, however, that Engine No. 13, when about six hundred feet from the fire, sank in up to the axle and could not be budged, etc.

The writer of the following was unaware of the difference between the subordinate process of citing an illustrative example and the co-ordinate or independent process of summing up the entire class :

* Industries of diminishing returns means such industries in which that point is reached or may be reached that additional doses of labor or capital or both of them do not yield so much return as former equal doses. An example of this is agriculture and mining industries,

By industries of diminishing returns are meant industries in which a point has been reached, or may be reached, where additional amounts of labor or of capital, or of both, will not yield as much return as the same amounts formerly yielded ; for example, agri-

or may be summed up as the so-called "extractive industries."

culture or mining industries. We may sum up all such industries in the phrase "extractive industries."

17. Condition Wrongly Denoted.—Even when the writer perceives that he is expressing a conditioned statement, he may fail to denote the exact nature of the condition. Not infrequently the writer puts such connectives as "when," "though," "although," in the wrong sentence-member, thereby upsetting the sentence.

* A short distance was passed when a simple fellow, called David Gamut, joined them.

After they had gone a short distance, they were joined by a simple fellow, named David Gamut.

* They had travelled nearly all day, when the Indian pretended that he was lost.

After they had travelled nearly all day, the Indian pretended that he was lost.

They were just entering the door of the . . . hotel for the last time, when a young man met them.

Just as they were entering the door of the . . . hotel for the last time, a young man met them.

* They had not proceeded far before they came unexpectedly upon Hawkeye and Chingachgook.

Before they had gone much farther, they came unexpectedly upon Hawkeye and Chingachgook.

This blundering use of "when" ("before") arises from the writer's failure to perceive that he is dealing with a conditioned statement which may be reduced to the logical formula: *When A is B, then C is D*. The "when" is general and antecedent; the "then" is particular and consequent, and also demonstrative. Usually the "then" is suppressed; the "when" cannot be suppressed. The careless writer, however, puts his "when" in the "then-" member.

Note the following examples of the correct use of "when":

Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.—*Deut.* vi., 7.

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side.—*John* xx., 20.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.—*Acts* ii., 37.

"When" is not always the proper word to use in the ante-

cedent member. If we wish to say that a particular action took place during the *continuance* of a general action, we should use "while" or "as" in the antecedent member.

As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing.—THOREAU.

As the sun rises higher, the splendor becomes more widely diffused.—J. C. VAN DYKE.

As I slowly approached the child, I could see . . . that she was uncommonly lovely.—THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you.—*Luke* xxiv., 44.

We took the freedom to break it [the sealed letter], while Lockwood stared with wonder, etc.—THACKERAY.

While Addison was in Ireland an event occurred to which he owes his high and permanent fame among British writers.—MACAULAY.

* I was walking down — Street this morning, when I noticed a crowd gathered at the corner of — Street.

* At the same time these people were proceeding on their journey, two men, Hawkeye and Chingachgook, were seated by a stream, engaged in earnest conversation.

He had had a hard struggle, he knew, although he did not suspect that more than once he had wrestled with death itself.

* Both writers [Dante and Milton] imprinted their works with their personal feelings, though their idiosyncrasies have not been obtruded.

* Magua was considered a friend to Munro, though Heywood suspected him a little.

If Shakespeare did not know the ancients, I think they were at least as unlucky in not knowing him.—LOWELL.

As (while) I was walking down — Street this morning, I noticed a crowd gathered at the corner of — Street.

While the party was thus proceeding on its journey, two men, Hawkeye and Chingachgook, seated by a stream, were engaged in earnest conversation.

Although he knew that he had had a hard struggle, he did not suspect that more than once he had wrestled with death itself.

Though both writers impressed upon their works their personality, they did not obtrude their idiosyncrasies.

Though Magua was considered by others to be a friend to Munro, Heywood suspected him a little.

If Shakespeare did not know the ancients, they were at least as unlucky, I think, in not knowing him.

The phrase "I think" is quite subordinate; whereas in the original form of the sentence it is made to bear the stress of the parallel. See § 28.

* It is no easy matter to put upon paper the varying impressions which have flitted through one's brain for a period of eight months, and I will therefore attempt only those most striking and most enduring.

* English I. is a very difficult subject to teach, it seems to me, because the students have in most cases been familiar with the language for many years and have been thoroughly imbued with many ideas on the subject, some of these ideas being radically incorrect.

As originally worded, the sentence seemed to convey the opinion that English I. is difficult because the students are familiar with the English language!

* One's vocabulary is largely extended, and by studying so many different styles of writing the student has excellent opportunities to acquire a strong and lasting style for himself.

* If we are teaching in New York State, I believe we are required to use certain of Milton's poems in the high-school.

* Though Milton was "fonder of the vague" than any one of the poets, yet with Macaulay we are impressed profoundly by his poetic instincts.

* Jumping out of bed, I threw open the shutters and gazed upon a landscape of extraordinary beauty.

Since it is no easy matter to put upon paper the varying impressions which have flitted through one's brain during a period of eight months, I will attempt only those which are most striking and most enduring.

English I. is, it seems to me, a very difficult subject to teach, because the instructor is forced to correct in the greater number of students certain wrong ideas which the students have acquired in their previous training.

By studying so many different specimens of composition, the student not only enriches his vocabulary but learns to improve his style.

If we are teaching in the State of New York, we are required, I believe, to use, etc.

Though Milton was, beyond all other poets, "fond of the vague," nevertheless he makes upon us, as he made upon Macaulay, a profound impression of his poetic instincts.

Jumping out of bed and throwing open the shutters, I gazed upon a landscape of extraordinary beauty.

If he [Harold] was forced to give battle, he resolved to give it on ground he had himself chosen.
—J. R. GREEN.

He resolved that, if he were forced to give battle, he would give it on ground he had himself chosen.

The following is hopelessly bad :

Taking her from the realistic point of view, she might have punished her unworthy husband.

Had she acted as the characters in realistic novels act, she might have punished her unworthy husband.¹

Sometimes the *when*-construction is to be avoided altogether, the sentence being really an unconditioned statement.

* The English are pre-eminently a practical people ; they care very little for sentiment. When they consider a question, whether political or industrial, it is always from the practical side.

The English are pre-eminently a practical people ; they care very little for sentiment. Every question, whether political or industrial, they consider from the practical side.

When Swift left his first charge in the church one can see no other than mercenary motives which should influence him to do so.

For Swift's action in leaving his first charge in the church no motives but mercenary ones can be found.²

The following, from Fielding, will illustrate the length to which a careless genius may go in constructing an impossible sentence of conditioned statement :

However, as there is scarce any difficulty to which the strength of man, assisted with the cunning of art, is not equal, I was at last hoisted into a small boat, and, being rowed pretty near the shore, was taken up by two sailors, who waded with me through the mud, and placed me in a chair on the land, whence they conveyed me a quarter of a mile farther to a house, etc.

However, there is scarce any difficulty to which the strength of man, assisted with the cunning of art, is not equal. [Thus far, a general proposition ; now comes the particular application.] After much discussion I was hoisted into a small boat and rowed pretty near the shore. Then two sailors took me up and waded with me through the mud to the firm land. Here they placed me in a chair, and thus conveyed me, etc.

¹ Quoted from Hill, *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 218.

² Hill, *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 274.

Unity in the Balanced Sentence.

18. Improper Change of Structure.—The object of casting the sentence in the balanced form is to give to the thought a peculiar pungency. This effect is obtained by making the several parts of the sentence alike in structure; the similarity of structure heightens the antithesis of thought. The examples of balanced sentence cited in § 7 illustrate the principle sufficiently. Consequently, the unity of the balanced sentence is diminished by every unnecessary difference of structure. For example :

As distinctly as Mr. R—— is at the head of the men, so is Miss W—— the premier lady player.

He was the first of the host who struck a blow, and he was the first to fall.—J. R. GREEN.

While she [Dinah] was near Seth's tall figure she looked short, but when she had mounted the cart and was away from all comparison, she seemed above the middle height of woman, though she did not in reality exceed it—an effect which was due to the slimness of her figure, and the simple line of her black stuff dress.—GEORGE ELIOT.

There was no keenness in her eyes; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects.—GEORGE ELIOT.

As distinctly as Mr. R—— is at the head of the gentlemen, so Miss W—— is at the head of the ladies.

He was the first of the host to strike a blow, and he was the first to fall.

While [As long as?] she was near Seth's tall figure she looked short, but when she had mounted the cart and was away from all comparison she looked tall. Yet in reality she was not above the middle height of woman; the effect was due to the slimness of her figure and to the simple line of her black stuff dress.

There was no keenness in her eyes; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full rather of what it has to give out than of what it is taking in.

The passages from the Old Testament, cited in § 7, are apparently departures from the strict rule of unity. It may be observed in explanation, however, that the Hebrew original is in verse, at least in quasi-verse, rather than in prose. In fact, this peculiar form of structure is not called balance but *parallelism*.

CLEARNESS.

19. General Remarks.—Quintilian's ideal (see § 9) is not fanciful ; on the contrary, it is eminently practical. It merely formulates the just demand of the reader ; namely, that the writer shall spare him, the reader, every unnecessary effort. Whenever the reader is puzzled by the writer's words, phrases, or clauses, he is wasting time which should be expended on the writer's thought alone.

Clearness, absolute clearness, then, is the writer's first and final duty. Yet it is the duty most commonly neglected. This neglect is due in part to carelessness and haste ; we write too rapidly and we take too little pains. Yet carelessness and haste will not account entirely for the failure. A large share, perhaps the larger share, is due to the writer's obtuseness to the fundamental principle that in writing he *is making an appeal to the mind of another person*. That other person sees only what is put before him ; he cannot look into the writer's mind, cannot follow the writer's half-conscious process of thinking. To the reader the sentence is a collection of words, phrases, clauses, the relations of which are fixed, not by the writer's caprice, but by the laws of grammatical logic. The reader is forced to construe the writer's sentence according to this logic.

What, then, is the principle which must govern the reader's interpretation of an English sentence ? The principle that *juxtaposition implies connection*. Since English is a language practically without inflections, the English writer who wishes to tell his reader that two things or two ideas are closely connected must connect closely the words representing those things or ideas. Conversely, from the reader's point of view, the fact that two words or phrases stand side by side implies that the things or ideas behind the words are also side by side. One or two examples will make this evident to the most obtuse :

Wanted, a room for a single gentleman, sixteen feet by ten.—*Adv't.*

Passengers are requested to purchase tickets before entering the cars, at the window.—*Notice.*

Being really that dead luggage which I considered all passengers to be in the beginning of this narrative.—FIELDING.

* She [Miriam] readily accepted the responsibility of the crime, although her share was but a look, and begged him [Donatello] to throw the care and remorse upon her shoulders.

Fastening one end of this [tape-measure] at that point to the trunk of the tree which was nearest the peg, he unrolled it until it reached the peg, etc.—POE.

[I] perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon but they fell through them into the tide, etc.—ADDISON.

Why did not these several writers, known or unknown to fame, detect their blunders? The dimensions of a room go with the room, not with the occupant; we do not usually enter a car at the window; Fielding did not mean that all passengers are dead luggage at the beginning of a story; the writer upon *The Marble Faun* intended his "although" to condition the whole sentence; the "which" in Poe belongs to "point," not to "tree"; similarly, the "which" in Addison belongs to "trap-doors," not to "bridge." Reconstructed, the sentences would read:

Wanted, for a single gentleman, a room sixteen feet by ten.

Being really that dead luggage which, in the beginning of this narrative, I considered all passengers to be.

Although her share in the crime was but a look, she readily accepted the responsibility and begged him to throw the care and remorse upon her shoulders.

Fastening one end to the trunk of the tree at the point which was nearest the peg, he unrolled the tape-measure until it reached the peg.

I perceived in the bridge innumerable concealed trap-doors, which the passengers no sooner trod upon than they fell through into the tide.

Want of clearness is not always due to the position of words—word-order proper. Occasionally certain words are ambiguous in certain peculiar circumstances. See §§ 24, 25. Occasionally, even, the sentence as a whole *suggests* a meaning different from that which the writer intended; in such a case the sentence must be rewritten with a general change of diction. These exceptions, however, do not interfere with the

general principle that *clearness is secured through the proper position of words*.

In the following discussion of Clearness, also in the sections upon Force and Ease, sentences will not be classified according to their form; Conditioned and Unconditioned Statements will be examined indiscriminately.

20. Pronouns and Pronominal Clauses.—In English grammar a pronoun refers to the noun immediately preceding. The rule admits of a few exceptions. Thus, the personal pronoun *he* can refer to a masculine antecedent only; *she*, to a feminine only. Also *who*, *whom*, must refer to antecedent persons; *which*, to things.

The only safe principle to observe in writing is this:

Never let any noun stand between the pronoun and the noun to which the pronoun really refers.

To this may be added:

Never permit any construction in which the pronoun may refer to more than one antecedent in the same sentence, or even in the same connection.

Men do not want to see things as they are. *They* look at things from *their* own point of view, and praise or condemn *them* according as *they* serve or hinder *their* ends.

If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human action, *it* is by no means certain that *it* would have been a good one.
—MACAULAY.

It [this index] arranges foreign fiction as well as English, but in every case where a good English translation of the book exists, *it* is included in the references.

On the first appearance of the volume in 1785, it gave rise to a certain amount of criticism.

Men do not want to see a thing as it is. They look at it from their own point of view, and praise or condemn it according as it serves or hinders their ends.

If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human action, there is no certainty that the book would have been a good one.

It includes foreign fiction as well as (no less than?) English; also English translations wherever good ones are to be found.

The volume, at its first appearance in 1785, gave rise to a certain amount of criticism.

When *the authorities* take in hand the "Testa de Nevill" and the "Chartæ Antiquæ"—both of *them*, unfortunately, corrupt texts—they will need to be entrusted to scholars with a competent knowledge of the subject, etc.

In the anxiety of the German government to push the new navy bill through the Reichstag, *it* is not careful to make its arguments consistent.

* There is no scene in the whole play *which* does not either go back to some preceding scene or serve to introduce some future scene.

* In other places he attempts to produce the same feeling *which he has upon the reader*.

* I do not think that study, in the case of school-children, increases their interest, unless *it* [*i. e., interest*] is already sincere. *It* [*i. e., study*] only deepens their dislike by making familiar what is already unpleasant.

* If *it* [Decoration Day] becomes a mere form, *it* would be far better to abolish *it* entirely.

* The University affords a course in English to its entering students, which if properly pursued by them will be of much benefit.

The barnyard showed a horrible mixture of mud and mire, through which Howard caught glimpses of the men, slumping to and fro without more additional protection than a ragged coat and a shapeless felt hat.

The authorities, when they take in hand the "Testa" and the "Chartæ," should entrust these texts—both, unfortunately, corrupt—to scholars having a competent knowledge of the subject, etc.

The German government, in its anxiety to push the new navy bill through the Reichstag, is not careful to make its arguments consistent.

In the whole play there is no scene which does not go back to some preceding scene or does not serve to introduce some following scene.

In other places he attempts to produce upon the reader the feeling which he himself has.

In the case of school-children, study does not, I think, increase their interest, unless that interest is already sincere. Study only deepens their dislike, by making familiar what is already unpleasant.

If it becomes a mere form, it ought to be abolished entirely.

The University offers to its entering students an English course which, if properly pursued, will greatly benefit them.

The barnyard was a horrible mixture of mud and mire, through which the men, as Howard watched them, slumped to and fro in ragged coats and shapeless felt hats.

The writer did not mean that Howard *saw* through the mud, but that the men *walked* through it.

When the *work* was published on the Franco-Prussian *war*, written by German officers who took part in *it*, of *which* General Maurice is editing an English translation, the Emperor William took ten thousand copies.

When the work on the Franco-Prussian war, written by German officers who took part in it, was first published, the Emperor William took ten thousand copies. General Maurice is now editing an English translation.

In the last there is altogether too much for one sentence.

Instead of a hasty appropriation of \$115,000,000 to build a canal *which it* was not yet known whether *it* would be possible to build at all, or at any rate for twice the money, the compromise provides only for a thorough inquiry, etc.

Instead of a hasty appropriation of \$115,000,000 to build a canal which perhaps could not be built at all or if built might cost double that amount, the compromise provides merely for a thorough inquiry, etc.

The following are from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* :

And there was a great dimness came before my eyes *which* I continually rubbed away, etc.

It was a small part of the deck *that* I could overlook.

There was a great stillness in the ship, in *which* I made sure I heard the sound of muttering voices.

Here Stevenson is not narrating in the usual form ; he is letting David Balfour tell an exciting story. The expression is exactly suited to the situation and to David's unstudied manner of speech. It has even a flavor of dialect, Scottish, perhaps even Gaelic ; certainly "there was a great dimness came before my eyes" is not literary English idiom. This gift of Stevenson can scarcely be recommended to the young for imitation ; but Stevenson narrating or describing in his own person is usually a model :

The waves come in slowly, vast and green, curve their translucent necks, and burst with a surprising uproar, that runs, waxing and waning, up and down the long key-board of the beach.

* In order to get the child to understand Milton, *it* would take

To get the child to understand Milton would take more time

more time than the teacher has at his disposal.

The author's style is easy and natural. Of its popularity we may judge from *its circulation*.

than the teacher has at his disposal.

The author's style is easy and natural. That it is also popular we may infer from the sale of his works.

What is meant by the "circulation" of a style?

* The people of Dante's time were not so polished as *they* were at the time of Milton.

An index with more than three thousand entries ought to meet all requirements. *It* does not. A hasty trial of *it* shows no clue to the important paragraph on Basket Ball, no allusion under Hare and Hounds, etc.

A classical style is not to be expected in books of this sort, but to be told that the keeper "should enjoy a day's shooting, whether *he shoots himself* or not," sounds strange.

The people of Dante's time were not so polished as the people of Milton's time.

An index with more than three thousand entries ought to meet all requirements. Yet *this index* does not. A hasty trial of it shows, etc.

[It sounds much worse than "strange." Why could not the author have written: "whether *he himself* shoots or not"?]

21. Modifying Words, Phrases, Clauses.—No rigid rule can be given for the proper placing of those expressions which modify the principal action or thought of the sentence. One general criterion or test, however, will aid the writer in determining whether his structure is perfectly clear. The sentence is perfectly clear when each modifying expression, while retaining its own force, *corroborates* the force of the words immediately preceding and immediately following. Conversely, the sentence is not perfectly clear when any expression *interferes* with any other expression.

The following, by Shaftesbury, has been often admired and quoted. Comparing modern poets with ancient, Shaftesbury writes:

If, while they profess only to please, they secretly advise and give instruction, they may now, perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed, with justice, the best and most honorable among authors.

Note *only, secretly, now, perhaps, formerly, with justice*. Contrast with such perfect ease and lucidity the following specimen of slapdash :

* Will any one who has seen a "Soll und Haben" left in the cloak-room without any name in it a few days ago kindly inform X. Y. Z.

Why "seen" rather than "found"? Anyhow, why should we ask whether anyone has found an object before we say that we have *lost* it? Was the "cloak-room" without any name in it? Is the name, which was wanting "a few days ago," supplied *now*? In general, are we likely to come across a book without *any* name in it?

Left, a few days ago, in the cloak-room, a copy of "Soll und Haben" without the *owner's* name. The finder will kindly inform X. Y. Z.

The best advice that one can give to young and old is this : Cultivate the habit of picking your sentences to pieces. *Try to discover misplaced words and phrases. Do not rest until you are satisfied that you cannot possibly arrange the words better.*

Does Mr. Bain really know these writers *at first hand* whom he introduces with so many qualifying adjectives?

The administration has determined *rapidly* to extend the jurisdiction of the United States over the whole of the Philippine group.

The wind comes across the lazily murmuring *leaves laden* with a warm sickening smell drawn from the rapidly growing, broad-flung banners of the corn.

Wanted, Roxbury, Grove Hall section, exceptionally quiet room for day sleeping, *in refined family*, by young man, with best references.
—*Adv't.*

Does Mr. Bain really know at first hand these writers whom he introduces with so many qualifying adjectives?

The administration has determined to extend rapidly the jurisdiction of the United States over the whole of the Philippine group.

Across the lazily murmuring leaves the wind comes laden with a warm sickening smell drawn from the rapidly growing, broad-flung banners of the corn.

Wanted, for day sleeping, by young man with best references, exceptionally quiet room in refined family, Roxbury, Grove Hall section.

Mr. — will deliver a lecture upon the value of exercise before breakfast, at three o'clock this afternoon.

Mr. — will deliver, at three o'clock this afternoon, a lecture upon the value of exercise before breakfast.

The wording of announcements is usually awkward. Yet, with care, the writer ought to be able to insert many items without ceasing to be clear. Note, in the following, the items of *subject, time, place, audience, effect*:

Yesterday evening, in — Hall, Mr. — delivered before the — Club, with great success, an interesting lecture upon our relations with China.

Some writers might prefer the order :

delivered with great success before the — Club.

Probably, however, the original order is better; it seems more natural to mention the hearers before speaking of the impression made upon them.

Macaulay passed his youth and early manhood during the period when this great change was taking place, *in historical studies*, and producing its first fruits.

I have seen something since those days of Oxford and Cambridge Dons *at close quarters*, something also of literary men and women, and should therefore know what vanity is.

Macaulay passed his youth and early manhood during the period when this great change in historical studies was taking place and producing its first fruits.

Since those days I have seen at close quarters something of Oxford and Cambridge Dons, something also of literary men and women, and should therefore know what vanity is.

In its original wording the sentence suggested that the writer had seen the Dons engaged in a hand-to-hand fight.

* He lost the opportunity of retrieving the past by refusing to acknowledge his relations with the woman and giving over his child to Silas Marner.

The vast concourse of men and women formed two long lanes, and between them the Queen and Prin-

By refusing to acknowledge his relations with the woman and giving over his child to Silas Marner he lost the opportunity of retrieving the past.

The vast concourse of men and women formed two long *lines*, between which the Queen and the

cess passed slowly in their carriage, drawn by two grays, *bowing right and left*.

Principally selected from the old poets, no poems being *admitted by living authors*.

* Please have the President of school sign the answer as *president of school with yourself*.

His mind all day flew ahead of the *train to the little town far on toward the Mississippi, where* he had spent his boyhood and youth.

* In parts the writing is very sketchy, as in the description of the street with its lamps suspended from iron gibbets and rudely *paved with the gutter* in the middle.

Redundancy, tautology, and circumlocution destroy force in a sentence, *as well as* a weak expression of a strong idea.

You might go through the very gulley it stands in a hundred times and be none the wiser.

He left Oxford, never to return to it as a residence, and not to visit it for *thirty-two years, in the following February*.

Fish dipped in the cereal [oatmeal] before frying is offered *in Scotland more often than in flour*.

Residence and instruction in German, with board, in the house of a gentleman of official position and education in high schools, if desired.—*Adv't*.

To show the enthusiasm with which our troops have been re-

Princess, in their carriage drawn by two grays, passed slowly, bowing right and left.

Principally selected from the old poets, no poems by living authors being admitted.

Please get the president of your school to countersign your answer.

All day his mind flew ahead of the train, flew onward toward the Mississippi, to the little town where he had spent his boyhood and youth.

In parts the writing is very sketchy, for example, in the description of the rudely paved street, the gutter in the middle, and the lamps suspended from iron gibbets.

The force of a sentence is diminished by redundancy, tautology, and circumlocution; also by the weak expression of a strong idea.

You might go a hundred times through the very gulley it stands in and be none the wiser.

In the following February he left Oxford, never to return to it as a place of residence, and not to re-visit it for thirty-two years.

In Scotland fish are more often dipped in oatmeal than in flour before they are fried.

[This is a hopeless puzzle. Does the clause "if desired" refer to "board"? Has the "gentleman" got his education in the high schools? Or may the boarder get his education there?]

To show the enthusiasm with which our troops from Egypt have

ceived, we may mention that we have been told of several instances where cabmen have driven soldiers *from Egypt to the barracks* without charge.

* Hawkeye, doubting the truth of the Indian's statement, together with Uncas and his father, concerted a plan to capture Magua.

He had a fork on his shoulder, a graceful and polished tool.

Jays called in the thickets, where the maples flamed amid the green oaks, with irregular splashes of red and orange.

A workman who knows the masterpieces of his craft *simply* cannot work as if he were ignorant of them.

* Having never submitted to anything requiring industry and patience, although she is quick and clever, she does nothing remarkably well.

been received, we may mention that we have been told of several instances in which cabmen have driven soldiers to the barracks without charge.

Doubting the truth of Magua's statement, Hawkeye concerted with Uncas and Chingachgook a plan to capture him.

He had on his shoulder a fork, a graceful and polished tool.

Jays called in the thickets where, amid the green oaks, the maples flamed with irregular splashes of red and orange.

A workman who knows the masterpieces of his craft cannot possibly work as if he were ignorant of them.

Never having subjected her industry and patience to the test, she is, despite her quickness and cleverness, unable to do anything thoroughly well.

22. Modifiers at the Beginning of the Sentence.—

In consequence of the faulty methods employed in teaching English grammar, the beginner is apt to imagine that the normal order of words in the sentence is: grammatical subject, verb, object. Such an order not only makes the sentence-structure intolerably monotonous, but also interferes with clearness, force, and ease.

In the matter of clearness it is instructive to note the frequency with which the best writers begin the sentence with a modifier, especially with an expression of time or of place. Such an arrangement *leaves the body of the sentence free for the clear statement of the verbal action*. For example, the opening of Irving's *The Devil and Tom Walker* consists of four successive sentences, each beginning with an expression of place:

A few miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior. . . . On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove ; on the opposite, the land rises abruptly . . . into a high ridge on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, etc.

In Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* the description of Governor Bellingham's mansion abounds in sentences which begin with an expression of place :

Here, then, was a wide and lofty hall. . . . At one extremity this spacious room was lighted. . . . At the other end . . . it was more powerfully illuminated. . . . Here, on the cushion, lay a folio tome. . . . On the table . . . stood a large pewter tankard. . . . On the wall hung a row of portraits, etc.

For expressions of time note the following :

For a time old Oxford was full of enjoyment for me.—IRVING.

One September night a family had gathered round their hearth and piled it high. . . . *Up the chimney* roared the fire, etc.—HAWTHORNE.

On the twenty-fourth of June, the tenth day after William's landing, he marched southward from Loughbrickland with all his forces.—MACAULAY.

On fine evenings I was wont to carry forth my supper (bread-crumbs boiled in milk) and eat it out of doors.—CARLYLE.

After the foregoing discussion, which has been much compressed, we may assume that the modified descendants of any one species will succeed so much the better as they become more diversified in structure, etc.—DARWIN.

In addition to the sentences corrected in § 21, the student may consider the following :

* He had left Clare on the knoll before the battle.

* Mr. A—— told me a half hour ago, when he was in Greece he paid only seventeen cents for a day's labor.

I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay

Before the battle he had left Clare on the knoll.

A half hour ago Mr. A—— told me that when he was in Greece he paid only seventeen cents for a day's labor.

About three o'clock of a black winter morning I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, and my way lay through a

through a part of the town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps.—R. L. STEVENSON.

* He altered his mode of life to a great extent and cultivated the acquaintance of people for Eppie's sake that heretofore he had had nothing to do with.

part of the town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps.

For Eppie's sake he altered completely his mode of life and cultivated the acquaintance of persons with whom he had heretofore had nothing to do.

See § 27 ; also §§ 47, 48.

23. Careless Omission of Essential Words.—Quite frequently a sentence is lacking in clearness because the writer has neglected to supply all the necessary words. For example :

* If you can get carnations and roses cheaper, bring us \$2 worth of carnations (white) and roses (yellow and white).

Does this mean two dollars' worth of carnations and two dollars' worth of roses, or one dollar's worth of carnations and one dollar's worth of roses ?

* With misgivings they [the Prince, Cyril, and Florian] are shown to their rooms.

Their minds filled with misgivings, they retire to their rooms.

The imperfect mirrors perfection more completely than the perfected.

The imperfect mirrors perfection more completely than the perfect mirrors it.

* As he [Sir Launfal] passed out through the castle gate on his fine charger and shining armor, he saw a leper who asked for alms.

As he passed out through the castle gate on his fine charger and in his shining armor, he saw a leper who asked for alms.

Let any housewife of our day, who does not find the Keltic element in domestic life so refreshing as to Mr. Arnold in literature, imagine a household with one wild Pequot woman, etc.—LOWELL.

Let any housewife of our day, to whom the Keltic element is not so refreshing in domestic life as it is to Mr. Arnold in literature, imagine a household with one wild Pequot woman, etc.

* This seemed contradicted by the manifest pleasure with which most women accepted his *attentions*. So much so that now he was indifferent to *them*, surfeited.

This seemed contradicted by the manifest pleasure with which most women accepted his attentions. The pleasure was, in fact, so manifest that he became indifferent to women, even surfeited with them.

Far back in the "seventies," before they had built any Public Offices at Simla and the broad road round Yalko lived in a pigeon-hole in the P. W. D. hovels, her parents made Miss Gaurey marry Colonel Schreiderling.

He spent the night after the English mail in rather severe pain.

* This party consisted of a young man of noble bearing, who seemed to be the leader or guardian of his companions.

* The feelings of most people are influenced as much by the weather as a barometer.

The common woman in them made cheer together after their own April fashion.

* Is not a poet as much of a genius as either a scientist or a musician?

The choice of subject for this occasion is significant. It indicates a felt lack in education.

* Dante employed the machinery of Vergil for his guide.

* The difference between the work of Addison and Steele was as great as the difference in their characters.

Ah! it is something to have known that Paris which lay at one's feet as one gazed from the heights of Passy, with all its pinnacles and spires and gorgeously gilded domes, etc.—DUMAURIER.

Far back in the "seventies," before any Public Offices had been built at Simla and while the broad road round Yalko still lived in a pigeon-hole in the P. W. D. hovels, the parents of Miss Gaurey made her marry Colonel Schreiderling.

The night after the departure of the English mail he spent in rather severe pain.

This party consisted of three persons, two young ladies and a young gentleman of noble bearing, who seemed to be their leader or guardian.

The weather affects most persons as readily as it affects the barometer.

The womanhood that was common to them made them take cheer together after their own April fashion.

Is not the poet as much a genius as is the scientist or the musician?

The choice of subject for this occasion is significant. It indicates that the members of the conference have discovered a defect in the system of education.

Dante used the device of taking Vergil for his guide.

The difference between the work of Addison and the work of Steele was as great as the difference in their characters.

Ah! it is something to have known that Paris which lay at one's feet as one gazed from the heights of Passy—that Paris with all its pinnacles and spires and gorgeously gilded domes, etc.

* The Rambler is marked with the impression of a deeper, more pious nature than the Spectator.

The Rambler bears the imprint of a deeper, more pious nature than that which we discern in the Spectator.

24. Obscurity and Ambiguity.—The opposites of Clearness are Ambiguity and Obscurity. A sentence is ambiguous when the reader is likely to understand it in a sense different from that intended by the writer. A sentence is obscure when the reader is uncertain how he is to understand it.

Ambiguity.—Either a word or a phrase has been put in the wrong place, or a word has been used in a double sense.

In addition to the examples of misplaced words or phrases in §§ 19–23, note the following examples of the misleading repetition of a word in different senses :

He looked for something on the floor of the car, until the whole car was leaning over endeavoring to discover the object of his search.

He looked for something on the floor of the car, until at last all the passengers were leaning over in order to see what he was looking for.¹

The fact impressed my childish fancy very much ; in fact fascinated it.

The fact impressed my childish fancy very much,—fascinated it, indeed.²

* The Primroses, wishing to make a better appearance in society, decided to sell *one* of their horses and with the proceeds purchase a finer-looking *one*. Moses was the *one* selected to attend a neighboring fair and make the necessary transactions.

Wishing to make a better appearance in society, the Primroses decided to sell one of their horses and with the proceeds purchase a finer-looking animal. Accordingly they selected Moses to attend a neighboring fair and make the bargain.

As Mr. Wedmore does not, *as* we understand his words, pretend to be exhaustive, there is no reason to quarrel with his selection, *as* all, or at least nearly all, of the etchers he has chosen use the needle with a

Since Mr. Wedmore does not, *as* we understand his words, pretend to be exhaustive, there is no reason to quarrel with his selection ; for all, or nearly all, the etchers he has chosen use the needle with a

¹ From Hill, *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 219.

² From Hill, p. 259.

true sense of its capacities and limits as a means of artistic expression.

* After the first outburst of zeal the *founders* of the "Edinburgh" found that their enterprise would take more time than they could afford to give.

The old blacklegs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for the calling for.—IRVING.

His *countenance* was of the true Scottish cast, strongly marked and rather harsh in features, with a shrewd and penetrating eye, and a *countenance* in which habitual gravity was enlivened by a cast of ironical humor.—SCOTT.

The department also contains a large and *growing* herbarium.

Obscurity.—A sentence is obscure when there lies over the thoughts or ideas a haze which prevents the reader from seeing them at a glance. This haze is due to a variety of causes. Sometimes the writer has not chosen the right word or phrase; at other times the words or phrases, though correct in themselves, are not well arranged.

The right choice of words cannot, of course, be taught systematically. All that can be attempted here is to cite a few hazy sentences as representative of certain general tendencies to blunder.

* Macaulay must have had reference to that group of singers which, etc.

* Their work was similar in that they both had the same aims to interest, instruct, reform.

true sense of its capacities and limits as a means of artistic expression [see § 38].

After the first outburst of zeal the founders of the "Edinburgh" discovered that their enterprise would take more time than they could afford to give.

The old blacklegs played shy; whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for the asking.

His countenance was of the true Scottish cast, strongly marked and rather harsh in features, with a shrewd and penetrating eye, and a mien (or, expression) in which habitual gravity was enlivened by a touch (or, play) of ironical humor.

The department has also a large and rapidly increasing herbarium.

Macaulay must have had in mind that group of singers which, etc.

Their work was similar in that they both aimed to interest, instruct, reform.

* Edmund objects to no purpose to the plan of giving a play.

* He worked about when and where he pleased.

Cream of wheat. Rarely delicious in flavor.—*Adv't.*

The report of the Commissioner of Pensions contains the rather surprising statement that the number of pensions at the end of June was actually more than 2000 less than it was a year ago.

It is not probable that we shall have a revision of Allen's work on American Book-plates at present. Meantime his former book is growing rare, and frequently commands a premium over the publisher's price.—*Adv't.*

The salary is \$1500, and the work is such as falls to a man who has everything in his own hands.

* To state the purpose to which an object is means is to make the most comprehensive description possible by the use of a single term.

Add to these Swanky . . . , who has varnished boots, wears white gloves on Sunday, and looks out for Miss Pinkerton's school.

Do you know, sir, that I am one of the director's wives?

* It is not entirely then on the plan of dim intimations that Milton gets his effects.

* A man cannot be a poet without being saturated with a sense of beauty.

In the last sentence "without" suggests accompaniment

Edmund objects in vain to the project of giving a play.

He worked pretty much when and where he pleased.

Cream of wheat. Singularly delicious in flavor.

The report of the Commissioner of Pensions contains the rather surprising statement that the number of pensions at the end of June was actually more than 2000 below the number a year ago.

It is not probable that we shall soon have a revision of Allen's work on American Book-plates. The book is now becoming scarce, and frequently commands a premium over the publisher's price.

The salary is \$1500, and the work can be arranged by the incumbent to suit his own judgment.

To state the purpose for which something is the means is to describe that thing as succinctly as is possible.

Add to these Swanky . . . , who wears varnished boots and—on Sunday—white gloves, and looks out for Miss Pinkerton's school.

Do you know, sir, that I am wife of one of the directors?

Not entirely, then, by means of dim intimations does Milton produce his effects.

A man cannot be a poet unless he is saturated with a sense of beauty.

or consequence ; “unless” expresses a necessary antecedent condition.

* Every line of Milton will stand long study.

Every line of Milton will bear long and close study.

* Nobody has conveyed so much sense of reality into obscure and indistinct impressions as Milton.

Nobody has given such a touch of reality to obscure and indistinct impressions as Milton has given.

The following sentences are examples of faulty arrangement preventing clearness :

* Milton’s figures are such as have to be imagined and as never existed.

Milton’s figures are such as never existed but must be imagined.

The French people have faults enough, but many of these, if the traveler does not look for them, are not apt to trouble him.

The French people have faults enough, but many of them will not trouble the traveler unless he hunts for them.

This was the view of the case that Godfrey managed to keep before him pretty closely till midnight.
—GEORGE ELIOT.

This was the view of the case that Godfrey managed to keep pretty closely before him till midnight.

* The reasonings of Macaulay lead us, if carried out, to absurd results.

The reasonings of Macaulay, if carried out, lead to absurd conclusions.

* It is well enough to say that by all the rules of writing such interruptions [in Milton’s *Comus*] should have an unfortunate effect, but if this result does not affect the reader, what becomes of the rules of writing?

It is well enough to say that by all the rules of writing such interruptions should affect the reader disagreeably ; but if the reader is not thus affected, what becomes of the rules of writing?

* Mr. — caught exactly the character of Cloten [in *Cymbeline*], a difficult task on which he is to be congratulated.

Mr. — caught exactly the character of Cloten, a difficult task ; he is to be congratulated on his success.

In general, the distinction between ambiguity and obscurity is obvious enough. Some sentences, however, are not easy to classify ; we may be puzzled to decide whether they are ambiguous or obscure. Fortunately the decision is not at all

necessary, and for the beginner is of secondary value. For him the chief thing is to perceive that a sentence is not perfectly clear and to correct it until it is perfectly clear.

25. Wrong Use of Certain Words.

1. *Because*.—This word occasions much trouble in both positive sentences and negative. Frequently it is used in a wrong sense. Or, especially in a negative sentence, it is put in the wrong place.

When used properly, “because” states the cause of a certain effect, the motive of a certain act—in general, the explanation of a phenomenon. For example :

Why did you give up smoking? Because I found that it was injuring my health.

His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts ; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life which he had always lived.—HAWTHORNE.

On the other hand, “because” is not the proper word for expressing a “condition precedent” nor for logically deducing a conclusion from premises. For example :

* The Protestants considered Henry’s marriage with Anne Boleyn valid *because* his marriage with Catherine had been annulled *ab initio*.

Here “because” is incorrect. The annulling of Henry’s previous marriage did not *cause* his subsequent marriage to be valid, but merely removed an impediment. After this impediment had been removed, in Protestant eyes, his marriage with Anne Boleyn was valid *because it was duly contracted between free parties*. The sentence should be reworded :

The Protestants considered Henry’s marriage with Anne Boleyn valid *inasmuch as* (or, *since*) his marriage with Catherine had been annulled *ab initio*.

* Sidney asserts that the poet cannot lie *because* he affirms nothing.

The logic of Sidney’s argument is as follows :

- a. A lie is the affirming of something.
- b. The poet does not affirm anything.
- c. *Therefore*, the poet cannot lie.

All this may be thrown into one sentence :

Sidney asserts that the poet, since he affirms nothing, cannot lie.

* Sidney asserts that because better is better it (!) does not prove that good is not good.

According to Sidney, to admit that better is better does not imply that good is not good.

The stress laid on the election and coronation [of King Eadred] should be noted. *It* shows how rash *it* is to assume that these things were omitted *because* they are not mentioned.

The stress laid on the election and coronation should be noted. It shows the rashness of inferring a disregard of these ceremonies from the circumstance that they are sometimes not expressly mentioned.

In the original sentence *because* seems to explain "omitted"; whereas the writer intended, though improperly, that it should explain "assume."

* It would be poor judgment to take Macaulay as a sound reasoner because he was lacking in philosophical thought.

Since Macaulay was lacking in philosophical thought, we cannot take him to be a sound reasoner.

* Burke objected to the consideration of this scheme because it was new and wholly untried.

Burke objected to the scheme on the ground that it was novel and wholly untried.

If we miss his correspondence with J. R. Green, *it* is *because it* is reserved for a separate volume.

We note the absence of his correspondence with J. R. Green; it is reserved, we learn, for a separate volume.

Negative sentences are difficult to construct properly with "because"; frequently the writer has the air of saying the opposite of what he intended. For example:

I did not applaud him because I was for the moment carried away.

Doubtless the writer meant to say:

I was so carried away by the speaker's eloquence that I actually forgot to applaud.

In that case the sentence ought to be recast:

Carried away for the moment, I forgot to applaud.

On the other hand, the writer might have intended to say:

I applauded him, not because I was carried away by his eloquence, but because I wished to show what I thought of his opponents.

In truth it is seldom perfectly safe to use "because" in a negative sentence, except in the formula :

not because . . . , but . . .

This formula is well illustrated by Macaulay :

The Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator.

The young writer is advised to put the "not" ("never," etc.) immediately before the "because." If the sentence thus constructed says exactly what the writer intends, it may stand. If, however, it says something quite different, it should be rewritten entirely.

Another device for testing "because" with a negative is to substitute a positive form for the negative. For example :

The book will not fail of a permanent place in literature, because it is badly written.

If we substitute for "not fail of" the positive "secure,"

The book will secure a permanent place in literature because it is badly written.

we utter palpable nonsense. Nor would "not because" help matters :

The book will fail, not because it is badly written.

In truth, the writer of the original sentence did not mean "because," but "in spite of," "notwithstanding." He should have said :

Though badly written, the book will not fail of a permanent place in literature.¹

2. *Only ; Merely ; At least ; Even.*—"The fact is, with regard to such adverbs as *only*, *wholly*, *at least*, and the rest of that tribe, that, in common discourse, the tone and emphasis we use in pronouncing them generally serves to show their reference and to make the meaning clear ; and hence we acquire a habit of throwing them in loosely in the course of a period. But in writing, where a man speaks to the eye, and

¹ Hill, *Foundations*, p. 220.

not to the ear, he ought to be more accurate ; and so to connect those adverbs with the words which they qualify as to put his meaning out of doubt, upon the first inspection."¹

The safest position for "only," "merely," is immediately before, or immediately after, the word or phrase to be modified :

He is only eighteen. He is eighteen only.

He was (became) eighteen only yesterday.

Only he knows of this.

I only bring forward some things.

I bring forward only some things.

A good man not only deserves the respect, but the love of his fellow-beings.

A good man deserves not only the respect but the love of his fellow-beings.

* A speedy trial is not only assured, but a trial by the law of the land and by the lawful court.

Not only is a speedy trial assured, but a trial according to the law of the land and by the proper court.

California not only produces gold in abundance, but quicksilver also.

California produces in abundance not only gold but also quicksilver.

For the position of similar adverbs note the following examples :

He is considered generally insane.

He is generally considered insane.

The New World was principally colonized by the Spanish, English, French, and Dutch.

The New World was colonized principally by the Spanish, English, French, and Dutch.

The French nearly lost five thousand men.

The French lost nearly five thousand men.

The Indians chiefly subsisted by hunting and fishing.

The Indians subsisted chiefly by hunting and fishing.

At least ; At all events.—These phrases are slightly ambiguous. Either they are sentence-adverbs—that is, they modify the whole sentence—or they are ordinary adverbs—that is, they modify some particular word or phrase. As sentence-adverbs they are put at the beginning of the sentence, and—by some printers—are marked off by a comma. When used

¹ Blair's *Rhetoric*, Lecture xi. Why did not Blair say "in *spoken* discourse," instead of "in ordinary discourse" ?

as ordinary adverbs they follow immediately the word or phrase modified, and they are not often marked off by commas. For example :

At all events, you will grant that I have made some progress. (Sentence-adverb.)

At least we ought not to decide rashly. (Sentence-adverb.)

You at least have been my friend. (Ordinary adverb.)

His brother at all events will not disappoint us. (Ordinary adverb.)

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The Romans understood liberty | The Romans understood liberty |
| at least as well as we. | as well at least as we. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| He knows at least how to read, | He knows how to read at least, |
| even if he cannot sing. | even if he cannot sing. |

Even stands immediately before the word or phrase modified.

Yet it is certain that even some of our best critics and grammarians talk occasionally as if they had a notion of some other standard.

Yet it is certain that some of even our best critics and grammarians talk occasionally as if they had a notion of some other standard.

This answer even puzzled the wisest.

This answer puzzled even the wisest.

3. *Not*.—Usually this word is a sentence-negative, that is, it gives to the whole sentence a negative cast. For example :

She did not, however, seem to hear me coming along the grass.

Let us not condescend to revenge ourselves by the blood of these miserable wretches.

Do not allow yourselves to be misled by the notion that an hypothesis is untrustworthy simply because it is an hypothesis.

In all such expressions the “not” is closely coupled with the verb.

Frequently, however, “not” expresses only a limited negation; instead of modifying the whole sentence, it modifies only a part. In such cases the “not” should be placed immediately in front of the word or words modified. For example :

But this time it was not Piedmont, nor a constitutional sovereign, that woke Italy from her sleep, but the Pope.

The state is not founded for charity but for protection.

The state is founded, not for charity, but for protection.

Every temperance man is not a prohibitionist.

Not every temperance man is a prohibitionist.

Is this the result of excessive study? In most cases I answer, No!

Is this the result of excessive study? Not in most cases, I answer.

I do not purpose to tell my reader how to see things, but only to talk about the art of seeing things, as one might talk of any other art.

I purpose, not to tell my reader how to see things, but merely to talk about the art of seeing things, as one might talk of any other art.

All that is said on the floors of Congress does not get into the *Record*.

Not all that is said on the floors of Congress gets into the *Record*.

A nation is tested, not by watching the class which looks down but by the class which looks up.

A nation is tested by watching, not the class which looks down, but the class which looks up.

4. *For*.—This word is either a preposition marking the indirect object of an action, for example :

I have reserved a place for you.

or a conjunction denoting the cause of an action or the ground of belief. As a conjunction, “for” is akin to “because,” but is less direct. For example :

He attracted little notice from the other inhabitants of the valley ; for they saw nothing remarkable in his way of life.—HAWTHORNE.

It is not proper, however, to use “for” as a conjunction introducing an hypothesis. For example :

* Steele endeavored to make men see that women were rational creatures, intended for companions, not for toys or drudges, and that *for them* to occupy the position for which they were created they must be educated.

Steele endeavored to make men see that women are rational creatures, intended for companions, not for toys or drudges, and that if they (women) are to occupy the position for which they have been created, they must be educated.

5. *With*.—The proper use of “with” is to introduce some person or thing that takes part in the verbal action. For example :

Yesterday I went to town with my brother.
 Mortar mixed with hair makes a better cement.
 He ate his dinner with a keen appetite.

Frequently, however, even by good writers, "with" is used to introduce something which is properly a part of a subordinate action. For example :

When he again pursued his course with his face to the Rhine, a huge mountain appeared to rise sheer above him.

When he again pursued his course, his face (turned) to the Rhine, a huge mountain appeared to rise sheer above him.

The face, of course, always accompanies the man ; but we can scarcely say that the man goes with his face. The following two are even ambiguous :

Innsbruck, Tyrol, 1900 feet above the sea, with dry, bracing climate.—*Adv't.*

Innsbruck, Tyrol, 1900 feet above the sea ; climate dry and bracing.

The sea does not have a dry climate.

* He died at sunset with his faithful slaves about him.

He died at sunset, his faithful slaves standing round him.

The writer did not mean that the slaves died with their master.

* We have these incidents of garrison life *with* the Kipling element *left out* (!).

We have these incidents of garrison life, minus the Kipling element.

They had but to lift their eyes and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.—
 HAWTHORNE.

They had but to lift their eyes and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, the sunshine brightening all its features.

The use of "with" has become so excessive in modern writing that the beginner should be on his guard ; he will act wisely in suppressing it wherever possible.

6. *While*.—The conjunction "while" is properly used to represent one action as taking place during the time of another action. For example :

While William was at his repast, a group of horsemen appeared close to the water on the other side.—MACAULAY.

“While” is not properly used to contrast one action with another. Such contrast should be marked by “though,” “although,” or “whereas.” For example :

At this Esmond ground his teeth with rage, and well nigh throttled the amazed miscreant who was speaking, whereas Castlewood, seizing hold of his cousin's hand, burst into a great fit of laughter.—THACKERAY.

* While the conscious purpose of the poet may have nothing to do with questions of morals, surely the sense of moral proportion in him must manifest itself in his work.

Although it may not be the conscious aim of the poet to give a direct answer to questions of morals, surely his sense of moral proportion must manifest itself in his work.

* While Dante has succeeded in making his images concrete, Milton usually leaves his vague.

Whereas Dante's images are concrete, Milton's are usually vague.

FORCE.

[These sections are to be read in connection with § 9.]

Conciseness.

26. By conciseness is here meant the omission of all words and phrases not needed for unity and clearness. The habit of condensing is not readily acquired ; when acquired, however, it is very effective. Concise expression saves the reader much time and quickens his understanding.

1. *Adverbs.*—Learn to avoid the tame and irritating formula “in . . . manner,” “in . . . way.”

* Having tethered their horses in a careful manner.

Having carefully tethered their horses.

* The student ought to be able to write with considerable fluency and in a clear manner.

The student ought to be able to write rapidly and clearly.

* He told the story in a straightforward manner.

He told a straightforward story.

* The ending of the poem is accomplished in a very peculiar manner.

The ending of the poem is very peculiar.

* The persuasion of the Kalmucks to revolt was brought about in a very clever way.

* He told his stories in an interesting way.

Sometimes an adverb in *-ly* is scarcely possible. Thus, when the adjective itself ends in *-ly*,—for example, *kindly*, *friendly*,—an adverb in *-lily* would be stiff. Yet the sentence :

* Sir Roger treated all his servants in a most kindly manner. is also stiff and tame. It can be improved by a change of construction :

Sir Roger treated all his servants with great kindness.

2. *Kind of; Sort of*.—These formulas are nearly always meaningless and are often positively vulgar.

* He wore a sort of felt hat.

* Hawkeye conducted the party to a sort of cave or cavern under the falls.

* His companion, William Dane, was a sneaky sort of a fellow.

* He told quite the opposite kind of a story.

They have to be acquired by a sort of special apprenticeship to the craft.—HUXLEY.

He wore a felt hat.

Hawkeye conducted the party to a cavern under the falls.

His companion, William Dane, was a sneak (or, a hypocrite).

His version (of the affair) was quite different.

They have to be acquired by (in?) a special apprenticeship to the craft.

3. *Pronominal Phrases*.—Learn to suppress them wherever possible.

* A loud exultant whoop late at night startled the occupants of the cave that was on the island.

The tears dropping from the shadow of the ugly sun-bonnet she wore.

* The sensitized plate consists of a piece of glass that is coated with a compound of gelatine and nitrate of silver,

Late at night a loud exultant whoop startled the occupants of the cave in the island.

The tears dropping from the shadow of her ugly sun-bonnet.

The sensitized plate consists of a piece of glass coated with a compound of gelatine and nitrate of silver.

* The party, having mounted the horses which awaited them, started on their journey.

Mounting their horses, the party started on their journey.

* The article shows a keenness of observation and an aptness in the use of figures, that give force to the writer's statements.

The writer's keenness of observation and aptness in the use of figures give force to his statements (or, make his statements forcible).

* The practice we have in writing, however, is only a part of the work we do.

Our practice in writing, however, is only a part of our work.

The pronominal clause is especially irritating when preceded by a superfluous "there is," "there are," or the like.

There are hundreds of children in this city who can neither read nor write.

Hundreds of children in this city can neither read nor write.

* There are many things which are most admirable in Macaulay's writings.

Many things in Macaulay's writings are most admirable.

4. *Tagging Expressions.*—Avoid ending the sentence with a "tag." (See also § 27.)

* This estimate is undoubtedly a true one.

This estimate is undoubtedly true.

* The surprise was a complete one.

The surprise was complete.

* The bicycle is a great invention, not only because of its saving of shoe-leather and strength, but because of the short time *it* takes to get to one's destination *by means of it*.

The bicycle is a useful invention, not only because it saves shoe-leather and muscle, but because it brings us quickly to our destination.

* A week spent on a bicycle trip fully repays one for his time devoted to it.

A week spent in a bicycle trip fully repays one for the time.

* He never offers his opinion unless directly called upon by one of the leaders to do so.

He never gives his opinion unless asked for it by one of the leaders.

* Andromache is not described as a beautiful woman, like Helen, but strong in mind and spirit, who

Andromache is described, not as a beautiful woman, like Helen, but as strong in spirit and faithful,

would not leave her husband for another man, as Helen did.

Come with me some bright, warm, late September or early October day.

I have seen no bird walk the ground with just the same air the crow does [!].

Moving like a dancer or skater, for the sake of one's inner rhythm, instead of moving like a ploughman or an errand-boy, for the sake of the wages you get for it.

* Therefore let us observe this [Decoration] day with due reverence to our dead and living heroes and not degrade it with ball-games and other sports, as so many of us are in the habit of doing.

5. *General Redundancy*.—Under this term is here included not merely the use of superfluous words, but also the use of long stilted expressions.

The paper on the wall . . . was made up of a heterogeneous mixture of flowers of unheard-of shapes and colors.

Having partaken of a hearty dinner, we embarked in carriages for a long ride through the city.

In a week or so he would be able to go back to the store and to begin again to earn his own living.

* He was granted permission to journey in their company.

* Godfrey Cass was a *man whose* character in the main was good, but was *somewhat* spoiled by irresoluteness and by a *certain degree of* moral cowardice.

a woman who would never, like Helen, leave her husband for another man.

Come with me some bright, warm day in late September or early October.

I have seen no (other) bird walk with quite the air of the crow.

Moving like a dancer or a skater, for the sake of one's inner rhythm, instead of moving like a ploughman or an errand-boy, for the sake of the wages.

Therefore let us observe this day with due reverence to our dead and living heroes and not degrade it with ball-games and other sports.

The paper on the wall . . . was a heterogeneous mixture of flowers of unheard-of shapes and colors.

After a hearty dinner we took carriages for a long ride through the city.¹

In a week or so he would be able to go back to the store and to begin again to earn his living.

He was permitted to journey in their company.

Godfrey Cass's character in the main good but was spoiled by irresoluteness and moral cowardice.

¹ Clark, *A Practical Rhetoric*, p. 67.

* This is a very low estimate of real poetry, which is the embodiment of truth expressed so beautifully and perfectly that our hearts and minds are satisfied as well as our imaginations stimulated.

This is a very low estimate of poetry, which is truth expressed so beautifully and perfectly that our minds and hearts are satisfied and our imaginations stimulated.

The expression of truth *is* its embodiment.

A period over which the genius of Dante has cast a lustre *of a kind absolutely unique* in all literature.

A period over which the genius of Dante has cast a lustre *unique* in literature.

To be *unique* is to be the *only* thing of the kind.

* The only exertions required *to be made on the part* of the rider are to guide the front wheel by means of the handle-bar and to move the pedals with his feet.

The rider has only to guide the front wheel by means of the handle-bar and move the pedals with his feet.

* There are, however, some drawbacks to the course; *as*, for example, the setting of topics *to write upon* with which the student is not acquainted.

There are, however, some drawbacks to the course, for example, the setting (assigning) of topics with which the student is not acquainted.

In such a connection the "writing" is implied.

New York has now a greater number of inhabitants than Paris.

New York has now more inhabitants than Paris.

* The Spectator was born to a small hereditary estate.

The Spectator inherited a small estate.

* The news came to us announcing the death of Sir Roger.

The news came to us of the death of Sir Roger.

* It was claimed by the people who lived near her that she was a witch.

Her neighbors called her a witch.

Arrangement of the Sentence.

27. Principal Places in the Sentence.—These are the beginning and the end. Of the two places, the end is usually much the more important, for the reason that it makes upon the mind of the reader the final impression. Consequently the writer should usually reserve for the end his chief thought. At the beginning of the sentence he should place those ex-

pressions which best enhance the ending, whether by way of explanation and illustration or by way of contrast.

The remarks upon Clearness, § 22, apply also to Force. The grammatical subject of the sentence is not necessarily the leading thought ; nor is the object of the verb necessarily the leading thought. What is the leading thought must be determined for each individual sentence on its own merits. For example :

To whom did you give the book ? I gave the book to my brother.

What did you give (to) your brother ? I gave (to) my brother a book.

As the student was advised, in § 22, to secure clearness by disregarding the grammatical order and beginning the sentence with an expression of time or of place, so here he is advised to secure force by disregarding the grammatical order and putting at *the beginning and at the end of the sentence those expressions which help each other most directly.*

Whoever will apply patiently these two principles will discover that in trying to be clear he is gaining in force, and in trying to be forcible he is gaining in clearness.

* Dante has his revenge upon those who have offended him by placing them in the Inferno.

There is to be a grand entertainment next week, to which we are all to be invited, or, at least, so I hear.

* One of the principal advantages of the course is the practice in off-hand writing which it affords.

* The first settlers came to this country to obtain for themselves a personal and religious freedom nowhere else obtainable.

* In fact, so cunning were his plans that at the outset not the least suspicion fell on him.

Upon those who have offended him Dante has his revenge by placing them in the Inferno.

Next week there is to be a grand entertainment, to which, I hear, we are all to be invited.

One of the principal advantages of the course is the practice (which it affords ; see § 26) in off-hand writing.

The first settlers came to this country to obtain for themselves a personal and religious freedom obtainable nowhere else.

So cunning, in fact, were his plans that at first they aroused no suspicion.

When the news of the victory came, the people exhibited the greatest enthusiasm, as it was natural that they should.

There are all sorts and sizes of them [bumble-bees]. They are dull and clumsy compared with the honey-bee.

We close at 5 P. M. during July and August.—*Adv't.*

Irving, in his *Rip Van Winkle*, has given us a charming picture of colonial New York.

When the news of the victory came, the people—as was natural—exhibited the greatest enthusiasm.

They are of all sorts and sizes. Compared with the honey-bee, they are dull and clumsy.

During July and August we close at 5 P. M. .

In *Rip Van Winkle* Irving has given us a charming picture of colonial New York.

The following examples, selected from writers of high standing, will illustrate the force to be acquired through skillful management of the beginning and end of the sentence :

Even his countrymen thought him blunt. To foreigners he often seemed churlish. In his intercourse with the world in general he appeared ignorant or negligent of those arts which double the value of a favor and take away the sting of a refusal.—MACAULAY.

Of geometry he learned as much as was necessary for the construction of a ravelin or a horn-work.—MACAULAY.

From the outset the government of the township was vested in the Town-meeting, etc.—JOHN FISKE.

In very small townships the selectmen themselves may act as assessors of taxes or overseers of the poor.—JOHN FISKE.

From the seventh or eighth year, according to the quality and capacity of the child, plane and solid geometry, the science of form, should find a place among the school studies, and some share of the child's attention that great subject should claim for six or seven successive years.—C. W. ELIOT.

Of the notices which have appeared regarding Lord Macaulay . . . the reader should not deny himself the pleasure of looking especially at two.—THACKERAY.

Other hope, in studying such books, we have none.—CARLYLE.

28. Parenthetic Expressions.—Much is gained in Force, and also in Ease and Clearness, through the use of so-called parenthetic expressions. If we write :

I think (that) he is very accomplished.
we make "I think" the principal assertion ; "(that) he is

very accomplished" is the object of the verb, and is called by grammarians a noun-clause. Yet in reality we ought to make "he is very accomplished" the principal assertion. This we do by means of the construction :

He is, I think, very accomplished.

"I think" now becomes subordinate and parenthetical.

The number of expressions which may be used parenthetically is very great. Only a few can be given here as specimens :

I fear that annexing the Philippines will be a round-about and costly road to good home-administration.

* I had soon exhausted every object of interest, it seemed to me.

I suspect that this subject would be quite uninteresting, if any one else treated it.

When you looked through the Romanesque portal, it was like looking into one of the shadowy chapels of St. Mark's, somebody said to me.

Annexing the Philippines will be, I fear, a round-about and costly road to good home-administration.

Soon I had exhausted, it seemed to me, every object of interest.

Treated by any one else, this subject would be, I suspect, quite uninteresting.

Looking through the Romanesque portal was, somebody said to me, like looking into one of the shadowy chapels of St. Mark's. (See also § 26—4.)

A word of caution is necessary. "Fear," "doubt," and one or two other words are not always to be treated as parenthetical ; sometimes they are decidedly emphatic. The student should contrast :

You are, I fear, running a great risk.

I greatly fear that your education has been too long neglected.

He is, no doubt, prepared to act.

There can be no doubt that somebody's blundering at Santiago cost many lives.

"No doubt" parenthetical means "probably" ; emphatic, it means absolute certainty.

29. Climactic Order.—When two or more expressions of the same kind are closely connected, they should always be

arranged in climactic order ; the law of thought requires that we pass from the less significant to the more significant. The only exception is the intentional anti-climax, used in humorous writing. For example :

That pensive, severe, and solemn aspect.

From a child he had been weak and sickly.

Upon the platform, decorated by the Ladies' Aid Society with taste, piety, and goldenrod, sat the Council. (Humorous anti-climax.)

All seems vigorous, youthful, and prosperous.

All seems youthful, vigorous, and prosperous.

The order of thought is: "youthful," therefore "vigorous"; "vigorous," therefore "prosperous."

Her heart was full of bitterness, and her face flushed with heat, and her muscles aching with fatigue.

Her face was flushed with heat, her muscles ached with fatigue, her heart was full of bitterness.

* The natives often set upon them with sticks, stones, dogs, and maledictions.

The natives often heaped maledictions on them, and even attacked them with stones, sticks, and dogs.

Melancholy, gray, leprous walls. . . . Dark, narrow, silent, deserted streets. . . .

Gray, melancholy, leprous walls. . . . Narrow, dark, silent, deserted streets. . . .

Even where there are only two terms, the more impressive should follow.

* She was excited and pale.

She was pale and excited.

* Our unprofitable and tiresome journey was at last at an end.

At last our tiresome and unprofitable journey was at an end.

* Such a derangement must have reduced society to its elements and led to a conflict of interests.

Such a derangement must have led to a conflict of interests and reduced society to its elements.

When society is reduced to its elements, what is left?

If several details or items are given, together with an expression which sums them up, the summing up should come last.

He was a picturesque young fellow with his broad sombrero, open

With his broad sombrero, open shirt, fringed buckskin breeches,

shirt, fringed buckskin breeches, high-heeled boots, and heavy spurs,
 high-heeled boots and heavy spurs. he was a picturesque young fellow.¹

When two expressions, one negative, the other positive, are used in contrast, the negative should precede. In other words: Say what a thing is not, before saying what it is. After the reader has learned what a thing is, he does not care to learn what it is not.

In the train, as he saw it, was the bride of that afternoon, borne away by the side of her husband. But it was the bride he saw, and not the husband. He saw her pale face, etc.

In the train, as he saw it, was the bride of that afternoon, borne away by the side of her husband. But it was not the husband he saw, it was the bride. He saw her pale face, etc.

Where, however, a negative expression is not used in direct contrast, but is merely one term in a climax, its position is determined by the general sequence of the climax.

He is regular, attentive, not hasty, anxious to make the most of his opportunities.

Occasionally a sentence seems to contradict the principle of putting the negative first. For example :

The horrors of the scene may be imagined, not described.

Certainly this is not lacking in force. Examining into the thought more closely, however, we shall find that it is not a contrast between imagination and description but is merely an admission that the imagination is at a loss for adequate words. The thought might be expressed more fully :

The horrors of the scene were such that although the imagination may see them it cannot find words for them.

Further, in many abrupt imperative sentences the negative is properly placed at the end. For example :

Take that book, not this.

A different order would necessitate a longer and less direct form :

Do not take this book but that.

¹ Hill, *Foundations*, p. 246.

30. Stability of Structure;¹ Active Voice.—In acquiring force nothing is more helpful than preserving uniformity of structure throughout the sentence. Conversely, nothing is more enfeebling than an uncalled-for change of structure. Further, in the statement of individual facts, the active voice is usually more forcible than the passive. The passive is better suited to general facts.

The beginner is apt to err in both directions. He uses the passive voice where he should use the active. He begins the sentence with one structure and then suddenly shifts to another structure, also changing perhaps from the active voice to the passive.

The following, from Macaulay, illustrates the principle of stable structure, and also the skillful use of both active and passive :

Since Octavius the world had seen no such instance of precocious statesmanship. Skillful diplomatists were surprised to hear the weighty observations which at seventeen the Prince [William of Orange] made on public affairs, and still more surprised to see a lad, in situations in which he might have been expected to betray strong passion, preserve a composure as imperturbable as their own. At eighteen he sate among the fathers of the commonwealth, grave, discreet, and judicious as the oldest among them. At twenty-one, in a day of gloom and terror, he was placed at the head of the administration. At twenty-three he was renowned throughout Europe as a soldier and a politician.

Week by week Mrs. M—— is appraising the merits of certain poets. Last week she wrote of Gray's *Elegy*, this week Cowley was examined.

* They began to march through the woods and did not halt until a small hill was reached.

* He vowed that he would never lie down in bed or that a pillow should never be under his head until he had begun his search for the Grail.

Week by week Mrs. M—— is appraising the merits of certain poets. Last week she wrote of Gray's *Elegy*, this week she examined Cowley.

They began to march through the woods and did not halt until they reached a small hill.

He vowed that he would never lie down in bed or rest his head on a pillow until he had begun his search for the Grail.

¹ Compare the remarks on Repeated Structure, § 50.

The sportsman may track his game to its retreat by the aid of his dog, but in hunting the honey-bee one must be his own dog and track his game through an element in which it leaves no trail.

She [the bee] will not touch honey as long as honey-yielding flowers can be found.

* They captured Chryseis, whom they gave to Agamemnon, and Bryseis, who was allotted to Achilles.

If we survey Byzantium in the extent which it acquired with the august name of Constantinople, the figure of the Imperial city may be represented under that of an unequal triangle.—GIBBON.

* He [Will Wimble] had caught a large fish one afternoon, and sent it to Sir Roger; a note was also sent with it, inviting himself to dinner.

* Emma persuades Harriet that Mr. Elton is much in love, and that it is only a question of a short time before Harriet will be asked to be his wife.

* Chingachgook lost his paddle, but it was soon recovered.

* As Sir Launfal rode away, a leper raised his eyes to him begging for alms. A piece of gold was thrown to the leper.

* They got much information from the inn-keeper about the customs of the students, and who also provided them with dresses in which they gain admission to the college.

The sportsman may track his game to its retreat with the aid of his dog, but the bee-hunter must be his own dog and track his game through an element in which it leaves no trail.

She will not touch honey as long as she can find honey-yielding flowers.

They captured Chryseis, whom they gave to Agamemnon, and Bryseis, whom they gave to Achilles.

If we survey Byzantium in the extent which it acquired with the august name of Constantinople, we may represent the figure of the Imperial city under that of an unequal triangle. [What is an "unequal triangle" ?]

Catching one afternoon a large fish, he sent it to Sir Roger, together with a note in which he invited himself to dinner.

Emma persuades Harriet that Mr. Elton is deeply in love, and that it is only a matter of a short time when he will ask Harriet to be his wife.

Chingachgook lost his paddle but soon recovered it.

As Sir Launfal rode away, a leper raised his eyes to him and begged for alms. Sir Launfal threw to the leper a piece of gold.

The innkeeper gave them much information about the customs of the students, and also provided them with [women's] dresses in which they might gain admission to the college.

It would not be correct, of course, to say that the active voice is always more forcible than the passive. It is correct, however, to say that in narration the active voice is nearly always more forcible than the passive. It is better to say that somebody did something than to say that something was done by somebody. For example :

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Here, among wild mountain scenery, were passed the first ten years of his life.</p> | <p>Here, amid wild mountain scenery, he passed the first ten years of his life.</p> |
|--|---|

For description no general rule can be given. The following sentence shows the active and the passive side by side, each used properly :

The houses are divided from the hill by a vein of stiff clay, yet stand on a rock of white stone.

The nominative "houses," it will be observed, governs the sentence.

In exposition the passive is always proper for general facts. The student may contrast the general statement :

In the United States more than 200,000,000 tons of coal are mined annually.

with the individual statement :

In our house we burn twenty tons of coal every winter.

31. Conditioned Statement.—In a sentence of conditioned statement the member containing the condition (protasis) usually precedes the member containing the consequence (apodosis). For example :

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne, the population of London was less than a million and a half.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.—Job xiii. 15.

If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Putting the consequence-member first without any special reason makes the sentence tame and awkward.

He was determined not to take offence at his reception, though it was anything but hearty.

* Dryden was a very thorough student of Chaucer, although he did not take up the study of his works until late in life.

Men will quarrel, fight, and take one another's life, though citizens of the same city and professing to love the same country.

* Marner had not a single friend when he took up his abode in Raveloe.

* The next member was the clergyman, who seldom visited the Club, but who made it very pleasant when he did so.

Though his reception was anything but hearty, he was determined not to take offence.¹

Dryden, though he did not take up the study of Chaucer's works until late in life, became a thorough Chaucer student.

Though citizens of the same city and professing to love the same country, men will quarrel, fight, and take one another's life.²

When Marner took up his abode in Raveloe, he had not a single friend.

The next member was the clergyman, who seldom visited the Club, but when he did come made himself very agreeable.

In mathematical and other problems the conditioning-member stands almost invariably at the beginning. For example :

If gold is at a premium of 20, what will be the price of a £100 draft on London?

An actual business question, however, is frequently, perhaps usually, put in the opposite order :

What is the price of a £100 draft on London, when gold is (at a premium of) 20?

When the conditioning-member is in the participial construction, it usually comes first, especially if it states the cause of the action expressed by the consequence-member or narrates an action which has preceded that of the consequence-member.

* Marner tied up the bag carefully, having counted over his shining gold pieces.

Having counted over his shining gold pieces, Marner carefully tied up the bag.

¹ Hill, *Foundations*, p. 245.

² Clark, *Practical Rhetoric*, p. 77.

If the participial member, however, is long and complicated, it should come last. The student may compare :

Brandishing his sword, he sprang across the room.

He sprang across the room, brandishing his sword and crying : Death to the traitor.

Finally, the order of members in a sentence of conditioned statement is often determined by the thought-sequence in the paragraph. (See § 48.)

32. The Periodic Sentence.—From the purely grammatical point of view a periodic sentence is one which does not make complete grammatical sense if stopped anywhere before the period.¹ For example :

On whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us is his invention.

A loose sentence, from the grammatical point of view, is one which makes complete grammatical sense at one or more places before the period. For example :

The proposed change of law does not seem to us adequate, although perhaps public opinion would not sanction a more radical one.

Stopping at “adequate,” we get a complete grammatical sentence.

Carter Harrison was elected mayor of Chicago last week for the third time, by a majority of nearly 30,000.

Stopping at “Chicago,” “week,” and “time,” we get complete grammatical sentences.

In general, the periodic structure of the sentence is conducive to force; *only in general*, however. Certainly the converse is not true: it is not true, namely, that the grammatically loose sentence must be more or less deficient in force. Many a loose sentence is all the more forcible because it is loose.

The skillful writer obtains his force by ending the sentence with that expression which he deems the most significant.

¹ See § 1. Sometimes in modern punctuation the semicolon marks a sentence,

Thus, in the first example quoted, the writer intended to lay stress on his estimate of public opinion. In the second example, the writer intended to lay stress on the size of Mayor Harrison's majority.

Further, as will be shown in § 48, the proper structure of any one sentence is not always a matter for that one sentence by itself, but may depend largely upon the surrounding sentences in the paragraph.

Quite independent of the paragraph, however, the individual sentence may be forcible because of its looseness—that is, because the conspicuous thought is put at the end. For example :

From start to finish, the seniors rowed a plucky race.

The seniors rowed a plucky race, from start to finish.¹

Which of these two sentences is the more forcible? Few will hesitate to say that, for both race and sentence, the chief thing is the “finish.”

To teach is to learn : according to an old experience, it is the very best mode of learning—the surest, and the shortest.—DE QUINCEY.

Emerson and Carlyle criticize themselves and one another in a way which leaves little for any one else to do in the way of formulating their defects.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Such situations bewilder and unnerve the weak, but call forth all the strength of the strong.—MACAULAY.

Almost the last words which Sir Walter [Scott] spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were : “Be a good man, my dear !” and with the last flicker of breath on his dying lips he sighed a farewell to his family and passed away blessing them.—THACKERAY.

These examples will demonstrate that a sentence, though grammatically loose, may yet be rhetorically strong. Nevertheless, the beginner ought to be thoroughly trained in the art of writing periodic sentences, for such training is the best, perhaps the only, means of curing him of certain chronic infirmities of the present age. Among these infirmities may be mentioned the tiresome constructions with “and,” “so,” “and so,” “but.” They will be treated at greater length in

¹ Hill, *Foundations*, p. 296.

Chapter III. In the present section it will be enough to suggest a rigorous training, say for seven or eight weeks, in the periodic sentence. For example :

* As a story-teller Mr. Macey was considered the best in the village. He told his tales over and over, *but* his hearers thought the old stories as good as the new.

* During Nero's reign the Jews revolted *and* Vespasian was sent with three legions to quell the revolt.

* But this was not enough material to write an essay, *so* De Quincey began to look about him for something else.

As a story-teller Mr. Macey was considered the best in the village. Though he told his stories over and over, his hearers thought them as good as if they were new.

The Jews having revolted during Nero's reign, Vespasian was sent with three legions to quell the revolt.

This not furnishing material enough for an essay, De Quincey looked about him for something further.

EASE.

[These sections are to be read in connection with § 9.]

33. General Remarks.—In this book the term *ease* is taken to designate something negative rather than something positive ; to be *easy* means to avoid whatever is awkward, whatever may offend the reader's sense of propriety or divert his attention from the words to the writer. When we say that a certain writer's style is *easy*, we mean at bottom that it is unobtrusive, that it does not suggest effort on the writer's part ; in truth, that it leaves us for the moment oblivious of the fact that there is a writer.

To acquire this kind of *ease* one must first of all understand that no word or phrase is in itself absolutely good—that all words are but relatively good. The *ease* of any one expression does not depend upon that expression alone but upon its surroundings. If two expressions side by side fit into one another, the effect is that of *ease*. If they clash with one another, either in sound or in sense, they are awkward.

34. Awkwardness in Sound.—This is much more fre-

quent than is commonly supposed. Writers in school and in college, and even many professional writers, seem to have a special gift of blundering into harsh locutions. They seem to have no *ear* for what they write ; they heap up words, usually nouns and adverbs, having the same termination, or they repeat the same words unnecessarily. For example :

He wished himself in the country—*somewhere where there were* brooks and groves and grass—*somewhere where there were* quiet and rest and surcease of noise—*somewhere where there were* time and space to think out the past and to plan out the future—*somewhere where there were* not two hand-organs at opposite ends of the block, etc.

He would strain his *ear* to *hear* the slightest sound.

I *soon saw* good *cause*, I must confess, to despise my own sagacity.
—FIELDING.

* This forest *covers* over three hundred square miles of territory that is *covered* with numerous hills and lakes.

I *can candidly* say, etc.

I confess with *humility* the *debility* of my judgment.

* His favorite pastime *being* in *getting* a few of his friends away to some secluded spot and conversing with them.

They worked *equally assiduously*.

But these coins are *but* a part of the treasures discovered.

* Thus hemmed *in* by man and fire, the castle soon gave *in* and the men rushed *in* and gathered *all* the booty not *already* consumed by the fire.

* Paragraph-writing in the class-room, as it *has been* required during the year, *has been* more helpful to me than the other method.

He would strain his ear to catch the slightest sound.

I soon had good reason, I must confess (or, admit), to despise my own sagacity.

This forest covers over three hundred square miles of territory, in which are numerous hills and lakes.

I can truthfully say, etc.

I confess with humility the weakness of my judgment.

His favorite pastime being to get a few of his friends away to some secluded spot and converse with them.

They worked with equal assiduity.

These coins, however, are but a part of the treasures discovered.

Thus hemmed in by man and fire, the castle soon yielded ; the besiegers rushed in and seized all the booty that had escaped the flames.

The paragraph-writing required this year in the class-room has been to me more helpful than the other method.

* To write in a few minutes a short sketch upon the subject assigned is a hard thing *to do*. This course teaches us *to do this*.

* The *prime principle* of the Edinburgh Review was independence of booksellers.

* Moses easily sold the horse for a *fair* price and then started out to examine the exhibits at the *fair*.

* Here he came to know Canning, who, when the new review was to be started, suggested him *as* the best man available *as* its editor.

* Gradually, instead of *being* regarded as *being* within the church, the Puritans began to be looked upon as standing outside.

To write in a few minutes a short paper upon the subject assigned is a difficult thing. This course teaches us how to do it.

The fundamental principle of the Edinburgh Review was independence of booksellers.

Having sold the horse for a good price, Moses started out to see the sights of the fair. (See §§ 16, 32.)

Here he came to know Canning, who, when the new review was to be started, proposed him as the man most available for the editorship.

Instead of being regarded as still within the church, the Puritans came gradually to be looked upon as standing outside.

Note, also, the following, discussed elsewhere :

After the first outburst of zeal, the *founders* of the Edinburgh Review *found* that their, etc. (See § 24.)

The old blacklegs played shy, *for*, whatever people may think, he is not always to be had *for* calling *for*. (See § 24.)

There is only one cure for such blunders. The writer should acquire the habit of reading his compositions *to himself*; at first *aloud*, later in silence, but with that mental perception which *suggests* to the mind the exact sound of each word.

35. Awkwardness in Sense.—This is usually due to the separation of words and phrases which should stand together. Not infrequently the separation has also the effect of diminishing clearness and force.

The sentence-parts most commonly separated are subject and verb; next in frequency of separation are verb and object. The writer separates unnecessarily subject and verb, or verb and object, by inserting an adverb or adverbial expression which could be better placed elsewhere.

* He directly started to convert those that he thought needed such.

* Palamon and Arcite, after a year's travelling, returned each with his little army.

* The Princess had in her childhood been told of woman's slavery to man.

* Burke, to show the growth of the colonies, compared the exports of 1704 with those of 1772.

* Sir Launfal tossed the man a piece of gold with a scowl.

* The King was pleased with the answer, and, as legend affirms, influenced by a vision of the monk Wulsinus, chose Westminster as the object of his favor.

* Affairs had now so entirely changed that those who had ignored him overwhelmed him with friendly offers.

* He hoped, by using his literary talent to feed a printing business in which his capital was invested, to make for himself a profitable business.

To "feed a machine" has become current; but to "feed a business" is scarcely sanctioned.

* Nevertheless, in spite of the repairs which were made from time to time on the building, it was falling into ruin.

* The restoration began in 1809, and the work was carried on continuously until the whole was finished, Christmas Eve, 1822.

Immediately he set to work to convert those that he thought needed conversion. (See § 22.)

After a year's travelling, Palamon and Arcite returned, each with his little army. (See § 22.)

In her childhood the Princess had been told of woman's slavery to man.

To show the growth of the colonies, Burke compared the exports of 1704 with those of 1772.

With a scowl (true?) Sir Launfal tossed the man a piece of gold.

Pleased with the answer, and influenced—so legend affirms—by a vision of the monk Wulsinus, the King chose Westminster as the object of his favor. (See § 16.)

Affairs had changed so entirely that those who had hitherto ignored him now overwhelmed him with friendly offers.

By using his literary talent to feed a printing business in which his capital was invested, he [Scott] hoped to increase his income.

Nevertheless, in spite of these occasional repairs, the building was falling into ruin.

The restoration was begun in 1809, and carried on uninterruptedly until its completion, Christmas Eve, 1822.

In the foregoing sentence there is really but one subject—"restoration."

* An opinion for him was either moral or immoral; those he did not share invariably fell into the latter class.

* He [Laud] made, without the sanction of Convocation or Parliament, alterations in the Book of Common Prayer.

For him an opinion was either moral or immoral; one which he did not share belonged necessarily to the latter class (or, category).

Without the sanction of either Convocation or Parliament, he made alterations in the Book of Common Prayer.

The placing of prepositions calls for much care. The rule of the old-fashioned grammarians and rhetoricians, namely, that a preposition should never stand at the end of a sentence or a long clause, is plainly untenable. The rule is not in accord with English idiom, which has always tolerated the preposition at the end. Whether the preposition may or may not end a given sentence (clause) is a matter of taste rather than of rule.¹ For example:

What are you thinking of?

What are you talking about?

are unquestionably idiomatic. We approach debatable ground, however, in such an expression as this:

He started to smoke his pipe, but found he had no matches to light it with.

Here the writer not merely puts the "with" at the end but also omits the object, "which." In full, the expression would be: "*with which* to light it." Still, in conversation, and in writing which reproduces conversation, also in simple narrative and description, such elliptical forms will pass without challenge except from the ultra-purists. On the other hand, dignified exposition is not tolerant of the preposition at the end, much less of the suppressed relative.

¹ See A. S. Hill, *Principles of Rhetoric*, second edition, pp. 198-201: *Foundations*, pp. 267-269.

The most striking instance of prepositional ending is one quoted by Professor Hill from the illustrious Hooker :

Shall there be a God to swear by, and none to pray to?

Here the great divine is not expounding Christian doctrine ; he is making a personal appeal, talking as it were with his hearers. The following, however, as an attempt at expounding Christian doctrine, is positively bad :

It is a mystery which we firmly believe the truth of, and humbly adore the depth of.

It is a mystery, the truth of which we firmly believe, and the depth of which we humbly adore.

In truth, what we call "emphasis" should have much influence in determining the proper termination of a sentence or a clause. To let the pauses fall upon an unemphatic word is always awkward.

* Upon the bridge he met a leper, whom he ostentatiously threw a piece of gold to.

Upon the bridge he met a leper, to whom he threw ostentatiously a piece of gold.

* His gentleness, combined with his excellent delivery, made him superior to and far more attractive than the mass of country clergymen.

His gentleness, combined with his excellent delivery, made him superior to the mass of country clergymen and far more attractive.

The following is a curious specimen of confusion in the use of prepositions :

* His plan of conciliation was to restore a perfect trust *in* the colonies *to* the mother country.

His plan of conciliation was to restore to the colonies their (former) perfect trust in the mother country.

Awkwardness results frequently from the misplacing of pronouns and pronominal adjectives. The following blunders are fairly representative :

* Before the death of Portia's father he had decided upon a plan by which Portia was to marry.

Before his death Portia's father had decided upon a plan by which Portia was to marry.

* All through Macaulay's essays he displays, etc.

All through his essays Macaulay displays, etc.

* Hurriedly seizing them, he strode off with the bags of gold.

Hurriedly seizing the bags of gold, he strode off with them.

Many sentences are so badly conceived that they can be cured only by reconstruction :

* Sin had the key to the gates of Hell, and not without her opening them could Satan get out.

Sin had the key to the gates of Hell ; unless she opened them, Satan could not get out.

* Satan declared his intention to pass through the gates and the futility of opposing him.

Satan declared his intention of passing through the gates in spite of opposition.

* Addison was not as much of a Greek as a Latin scholar.

Addison was a better scholar in Latin than in Greek.

* Another point of view was their [the colonists'] agriculture.

Another point to be considered was their agriculture.

* The language, as far as grammatical structure goes, has become greatly simplified.

In its grammatical structure the language has been greatly simplified.

* Next came Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in London for his industry, good sense, and wide experience.

Next came Sir Andrew Freeport, a London merchant eminent for his industry, good sense, and wide experience.

* When they [Chingachgook and Uncas] were alone their attitude toward one another changed from chief to warrior to father and son.

When they were alone, they were no longer chief and warrior but father and son.

* For the great bulk of the English middle class to attain this culture, Matthew Arnold saw the first requisite to be a reform in the school system.

That the great bulk of the English middle class may attain to this culture, the first requisite, according to Arnold, is a reform of the school system. (*For* ; see § 25, No. 4.)

* The articles which he had in the *Spectator* contain some of the finest language that has been produced in our tongue.

His papers in the *Spectator* exhibit some of the best writing in our language.

* To be a poet requires just the opposite age that is required to be a scientist.

The poet needs to live in an age just the opposite of that suited to the man of science.

What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

But what it would be really wisest for him to do was to try and soften his father's anger against Dunsey.—GEORGE ELIOT.

* A knowledge which it is extremely improbable that the boys and girls can possess.

What will happen is rather this : other matters, far too many, will be crowded into education. (See also § 35.)

But really his wisest course would be to try to soften his father's anger against Dunsey.

A knowledge which, in all probability, the boys and girls do not possess.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL AND CHRONIC BLUNDERS.

[Many of these blunders have been already touched upon in various sections of this book. It is desirable, however, to sum up the more usual blunders and discuss them in one place, by way of illustrating the prevailing carelessness of modern writing.]

AND.

36. At present "and" is the worst abused word in the language. It is used by writers of every grade, from the author by profession down to the school-boy penning his first composition; used on every possible occasion; used to couple all conceivable forms of statement. It is misused so persistently and so universally as to lose its true force and become a meaningless patch-word.

Properly used, "and" is a term of addition. Its function is that of the algebraic sign +, namely to connect two terms of the same class, two or more subjects, two or more objects, two or more modifiers, two or more verbal actions following each other in mere chronological order. The word "and" does not express the relation of cause and effect, does not express concession, comparison, chronological dependence. Consequently "and" should not be used to connect the members of a conditioned statement.

Examples of correct use are :

James and his brother were my companions.

I visited New York and Boston.

The trial has been fairly and humanely carried on.

You observe the mark of a dirty hand on the window-frame, and perhaps . . . you notice the impress of a hob-nailed shoe on the gravel.—

HUXLEY.

In the following, note the incorrect use of "and" to express cause or effect, concession, chronological dependence :

The report of the South Africa committee is out, *and* the mystery of the hushing-up policy is a mystery still. Sir Wemyss Reid is a calm observer of politics, *and* he calls it the most discreditable episode in the history of parliament.

I turned to descend, and as I did so could see the valley below alive with Indians, etc.—PARKMAN.

If he [Harold] was forced ~~to~~ give battle, he resolved ~~to~~ give it on ground ~~he~~ himself had chosen, ~~and~~ advancing near enough to the coast to check William's ravages, he entrenched himself on a hill, etc.—J. R. GREEN.

The radiant heat from the sun goes along with the light from the sun, *and* when you shut one off, . . . the other is intercepted at the same time.—TAIT.

* Bassanio was away, trying to win a very pretty lady's hand. This beautiful person was called Portia, *and* the way she was to get her husband was, etc.

No letter, however, is used twice, *and* there can be no confusion.

* He had a high sense of justice and a single unjust act would arouse his anger.

An impulse seized her, and she squeezed between the rails of the fence and stood in the road.

The report of the South Africa committee is out, yet the mystery of the hushing-up policy is a mystery still. Sir Wemyss Reid, though a calm observer of politics, calls the episode the most discreditable one in the history of parliament.

Turning to descend, I could ~~see~~ the valley below ~~alive~~ with Indians, etc.

He resolved that, if forced to give battle, he would give it on ground he himself had chosen ; accordingly, advancing near enough to the coast to check William's ravages, he entrenched himself on a hill, etc.

The radiant heat from the sun goes along with the light from the sun ; for, when you shut off one, . . . you shut off the other at the same time. [See also § 30.]

Bassanio was absent, trying to win the hand of a beautiful lady named Portia. The manner in which Portia was to get her husband was, etc.

Since, however, no letter is used twice, there can be no confusion.

His sense of justice was so acute that a single unjust act would provoke his anger.

Seized by a sudden impulse, she squeezed herself between the rails of the fence and stood in the road.

* Carlyle is particularly happy in the choice of illustrative figures of speech and they give clearness and vigor to his style.

* Moses eagerly consented to the deal and congratulated himself on his sharpness, *and* his surprise upon finding he *is* swindled *was* only exceeded by the wrath of the family.

* His heart was cold, and as devoid of emotion as the hard rules of discipline by which he lived.

By his singularly happy choice of illustrative figures of speech Carlyle gives to his style clearness and vigor.

Moses eagerly consented to the bargain and congratulated himself on his sharpness. His surprise upon finding that he had been (see § 40) swindled was exceeded only by the anger of the family.

His heart was cold, as devoid of emotion as the hard rules of discipline by which he lived.

In the sentence just quoted the second part is a mere illustration of the first part; the grammatical connection is that of apposition.

A safe rule for teachers and for scholars is to assume that every "and" is used incorrectly unless the correctness can be demonstrated. Another safe rule is to **cultivate the habit of writing periodic sentences.** (See § 32.)

The Idiomatic And.

One use of "and", found in the best writers, is so peculiar as to merit being called idiomatic. For example:

See Naples and die!—*Proverb.*

I did but jest and you turn upon me like so many adders.—SCOTT.

Pass beneath it into the court and the sixteenth century closes round you.—HENRY JAMES.

A few more days and this essay will follow the "Defensio Populi" to the dust and silence of the upper shelf.—MACAULAY.

To make a government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of government; teach obedience; and the work is done.—BURKE.

Each of these sentences might be thrown into another form; yet each is much better as it is. Each is almost epigrammatic in its conciseness and tingles with nervous energy. This energy, in fact, sufficiently distinguishes the idiomatic "and" from the lifeless "and" previously criticized.

Another peculiar use of "and" remains to be noted; it might perhaps be called the "epic." Readers of the Bible will observe the frequency with which the verses, especially in the Old Testament, begin in this fashion:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, etc.

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper.

And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Of the eighteen verses in the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus, seventeen begin with "And."

English prose writings of the early period, and even as late as the sixteenth century, are lavish in the use of this "and." For example:

And when he heard these words, he started up and saw great clearness about him. And then he lifted up his hand and blessed him[self], and so took his arms and made him [self] ready, and so by adventure he came by a strand and found a ship, the which was without sail or oar. And as soon as he was within the ship, there he felt the most sweetness he ever felt, etc.—SIR THOMAS MALORY. (Fifteenth century.)

And therewith he plucked up his doublet-sleeve to his elbow upon his left arm, etc. And thereupon every man's mind sore misgave them, etc. And also was no man there present but knew that his arm was ever such since his birth.—SIR THOMAS MORE. (Sixteenth century.)

The present is no place for a discussion of the merits and demerits of the old-fashioned style. Early English and the King James version of the Bible may be safely left to justify themselves. Modern usage, however, is certainly not in favor of "and" as a sentence copulative. The most careful writers avoid the construction, or use it sparingly and with a peculiar grace which cannot be imitated by the young. Hawthorne, in especial, is very happy in his use of it. Thus:

And what was the Great Stone Face?

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him.

Hawthorne's skill can be acquired only by one who will also take the pains to acquire from Hawthorne the habit of *not* using "and." In general, the beginner should be advised to let the And-copulative alone.

SO; AND SO.

37. The word "so" is, in strictness, an adverb of manner or of comparison. For example:

He was so late in arriving that I went home without seeing him.

This book is good; that is not so good.

Be so kind as to close the window.

In conversation "so" is frequently used as a term of inference or of result. For example:

So you think I am mistaken.

One of the horses cast a shoe, so we missed the train.

Sentences like the last two are not improper in conversation, or in writing which aims at reproducing conversation, but they are certainly bad in writing of a higher order, especially in exposition. For example:

* Help was refused him, so he crawled to the porch.

* He saw that nothing could be gained by open hostility, so he set about to gain his end by secret negotiations.

* The colonies were too valuable to be given up without a struggle, so he therefore argued for a conciliatory policy.

Help being refused him, he crawled to the porch.

Seeing that nothing could be gained by open hostility, he set about to gain his end by secret negotiations.

The colonies were too valuable to be given up without an effort; therefore he argued for a policy of conciliation. (See § 34.)

"And so" is merely an aggravated variety of the improper "so." For example:

I had been cooped up in the house all the morning, and so started out in the middle of the afternoon for a walk.

As I had been cooped up in the house all the morning, I started in the middle of the afternoon for a walk.¹

AS; AS TO; AS REGARDS.

38. "As" is frequently used for some other word. Compare also § 24.

¹ Hill, *Foundations*, p. 274. Some writers would prefer "Since" to "As." A still simpler form would be: *Having been* cooped up, etc.

* As the leaders met, there was a clash of splintering spears, mingled with cries of the wounded.

When the leaders met, there was a clash of splintering spears, mingled with cries of the wounded.

“As” is expressive of duration rather than of momentary action. For example :

As I was walking down hill, I met your friend coming up.

* He tried to enter the castle but was not admitted, as no one knew him.

He tried to enter the castle but was not admitted, for (or, since) no one knew him.

* When he opened the book he saw several marks which Sir Roger had made, and as he had always liked him very much, tears came to his eyes.

On opening the book he saw several marks made by Sir Roger ; since he had always loved Sir Roger deeply, tears came to his eyes.

“As to,” in modern indiscriminate usage, is a meaningless preposition-phrase. Like the “and” already criticized, it is a sign that the writer has been too careless to think out the proper term. For example :

* As to language in its rudest state being most suitable for the expression of poetry, it would be difficult to accept that statement.

That language in its rudest state should be best suited to the expression of poetry is incredible.

* As to him you are quite mistaken.

About him you are quite mistaken.

* As to this we are in doubt.

On this point we are in doubt.

* As to Wordsworth, all critics now admit that he was a great poet.

Wordsworth, all critics now admit, was a great poet. (See also § 28.)

The decisions, even in the same court, are *so* conflicting *as* to make it almost impossible to lay down any rule *as* to the limits of the police power.

The decisions, even in the same court, are so conflicting as to make it almost impossible to lay down any rule for determining the limits of the police power.

In the last sentence the phrase “*so* conflicting *as*” is a perfectly legitimate comparison ; but the second “*as* to” makes the whole peculiarly awkward.

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter

This shows how needful it is that those who are to discuss any

together to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

As regards is little, if any, better than *as to*.

| | |
|---|--|
| No other documents of anything like equal importance as regards the life of Dante have come down to us. | No other documents of anything like equal importance for the life of Dante have come down to us. |
|---|--|

BUT.

39. The excessive use of the conjunction "but" calls for energetic protest. Professor Wendell's remarks are worth pondering: ¹

"As a matter of fact, people do not think with precision; and thought which lacks precision commonly presents itself in experience as either a simple addition to what precedes or an abrupt breaking off. In the former case, one instinctively writes *and*; in the latter, *but*. And¹ there are few more useful practical suggestions in composition than this: Use no more *ands* or *buts* than you can help."

Properly used, the conjunction "but" expresses direct opposition. For example:

The maid is not dead but sleepeth.

Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness; but they can never be begged as alms.

The Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator.

"But" is not properly used to express a mere modification of view, a restriction, qualification, or concession. For such modifications the beginner should acquire once for all the habit of employing "yet," "still," however," "whereas." (See also § 51.)

| | |
|---|---|
| The French were victorious, but they paid dearly for their victory. | The French were victorious, yet they paid dearly for their victory. |
|---|---|

¹ *English Composition*, p. 145. Why did not Wendell, however, begin his concluding sentence: "Consequently there are few," etc.? The "And there are" is a violation of his own principle.

But above all let us not be influenced by any angry feelings.

Above all, let us not be influenced by any angry feelings.

In the sentence just quoted the "but" is meaningless. In the following sentence the "but" is actually ambiguous :

She [Mrs. Mount] never uttered an idea or a reflection, but Richard thought her the cleverest woman he had ever met.

Though she never uttered an idea or a reflection, Richard thought her the cleverest woman he had ever met.

* He was a Puritan, but in many of his views went far beyond his party.

He was a Puritan who, in many of his views, went far beyond his party.

The writer of the last sentence intended merely to describe Milton's peculiar form of Puritanism.

Among prominent writers the one most addicted to excessive use of "but" is Macaulay. The following, from his essay on Addison, is a striking specimen :

Addison sat for Malmesbury in the House of Commons which was elected in 1708. *But* (1) the House of Commons was not the field for him. The bashfulness of his nature made his wit and eloquence useless in debate. He once rose, *but* (2) could not overcome his diffidence, and ever after remained silent. Nobody can think it strange that a great writer should fail as a speaker. *But* (3) many, probably, will think it strange that Addison's failure as a speaker should have had no unfavorable effect upon his success as a politician. In our time a man of high rank and great fortune might, though speaking very little and very ill, hold a considerable post. *But* (4) it would now be inconceivable that a mere adventurer . . . should become . . . Secretary of State, without some oratorical talent.

Why could not Macaulay have written :

- (1) The House of Commons, *however*, was not, etc.
- (2) *Though* he once rose, he could not overcome, etc.
- (3) *Still*, many probably will think, etc.
- (4) *Nevertheless*, it would now be inconceivable, etc.

George Eliot, in her *Silas Marner*, chapter xii., is equally indiscriminating :

But her arms had not yet relaxed, etc.

But the complete torpor came at last, etc.

But presently the warmth, etc.

But where was Silas Marner, etc.

THE HISTORICAL PRESENT.

40. By "historical present" the rhetorician means in general narrating events of the past in terms of the present; the grammarian means the use of such forms as "is," "are," "has," "have," for "was," "were," "had," etc.

That is, the past is treated as if present. The form of expression is figurative. It presupposes in the writer a vivid imagination, operating to make past events seem actually present. To this extent the historical present is akin to the bolder figure called vision.

When used by skillful writers, the historical present is an effective device; it gives to narration a certain vivacity. On the other hand, when used by unskillful writers, the historical present becomes an intolerable nuisance. Writers in school and college seem to be under the delusion that *an occasional change of tense is needed for the sake of change*. In consequence, the reader is forced to struggle through paragraphs and sentences in which present and past are hopelessly confounded. For example:

* One day, when the Spectator *was* visiting at the Coverley mansion, Sir Roger *arranges* for a fox-hunt, because, on account of his age, he *could* not ride after foxes.

* The Prince *demand*ed that he stop, but he *does* not, and the Prince, enraged, *struck* him and addressed him as "Sir."

At last the long-looked-for spring *appeared* . . . and we gladly *gave* up . . . winter amusements for our out-of-door sports. Again we *glide* in our swift shells . . . again we *play* ball, etc.¹

The historical present should always be marked, or at least suggested, by a word or two of explanation. A brilliant example is to be found in *David Copperfield*.² The novelist, in giving a general account of David's life after the mother's second marriage, begins:

¹ A. S. Hill, *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 97.

² Quoted in Genung, *Practical Rhetoric*, p. 113.

Let me remember how it *used* to be, and bring one morning back again.

I *come* into the second-best parlor after breakfast. . . . My mother *is* ready for me at her writing-desk, etc.

And so on for two pages, all in the present form. Then the end is marked :

It *seems* to me, at this distance of time, as if my unfortunate studies generally *took* this course, etc.

Unfortunately the young writer in school or in college is not a Dickens, is wholly without imagination, uses the historical present without motive or excuse, merely as a clumsy trick for varying routine. In truth, *there is no call for the historical present in ordinary writing*. The kindest service, accordingly, that any teacher can render to his scholars is to *require them summarily to discontinue all such uncouthness*. When one enters the vocation of letters there will be time enough for the cultivation of the historical present.

Not every instance, however, of the present tense in narrating the past is to be condemned as "historical." Very many general truths and facts can be expressed only in the present tense and are thus expressed by the most careful writers. For example :

Though they *dwelt* in such solitude, these people *held* daily converse with the world. The Notch *is* a great artery through which the life-blood of internal commerce *is* continually throbbing, etc.

It *was* one of those primitive taverns, where the traveller *pays* only for food and lodging, but *meets* with a homely kindness beyond all price.

The family and the tavern here described by Hawthorne have long ago passed away. But the Crawford Notch still *is* a great artery ; we may still find taverns where the traveller *meets* with such treatment.

CHAPTER IV.

PARAGRAPHING.

41. Kinds of Paragraph.—By the term Paragraph we mean two things, intimately related, yet quite distinct.

1. *The Independent, or Isolated, Paragraph.*—For example :

The filing of an amended charter at Trenton yesterday by the Amalgamated Copper Company, increasing its capital stock from \$75,000,000 to \$155,000,000, was for the purpose of absorbing the Butte and Boston and Boston and Montana Companies.

The Kings County Coöperative Building and Loan Association, which discontinued business early this year, will return all the invested funds, with a bonus of 7 per cent.

Five shots, none of which took effect, were fired at Alexander B. Shepherd, ex-Governor of the District of Columbia, at Batopilas, Mexico, recently. The assailant, a Mexican, was captured and sent to the State capital to be dealt with.

Every newspaper contains a column or more of such independent paragraphs. They are found also in literature. Thus Coleridge's *Table Talk* is little more than a string of independent paragraphs on every conceivable subject. For example :

The best way to bring a clever young man, who has become unsettled and skeptical, to reason, is to make him *feel* something in any way. Love, if sincere and unworldly, will, in nine instances out of ten, bring him to a sense and assurance of something real and actual ; and that sense alone will make him *think* to a sound purpose, instead of dreaming that he is thinking.

I certainly think that juries would be more conscientious if they were allowed a larger discretion. But, after all, juries cannot be better than the mass out of which they are taken. And if juries are not honest and single-minded, they are the worst, because the least responsible, instruments of judicial or popular tyranny.

2. *The Connected Paragraph.*—This is merely a part of a larger whole. For example, the following three paragraphs from Addison's *Sir Roger and the Witches* :

I was secretly concerned to see human nature in so much wretchedness and disgrace, but at the same time could not forbear smiling to hear Sir Roger, who is a little puzzled about the old woman, advising her, as a justice of the peace, to avoid all communication with the devil, and never to hurt any of her neighbors' cattle. We concluded our visit with a bounty, which was very acceptable.

In our return home, Sir Roger told me that old Moll had been often brought before him for making children spit pins, and giving maids the nightmare; and that the country people would be tossing her into a pond, and trying experiments with her every day, if it was not for him and his chaplain.

I have since found, upon inquiry, that Sir Roger was several times staggered with the reports that had been brought him concerning this old woman, and would frequently have bound her over to the county sessions, had not his chaplain with much ado persuaded him to the contrary.

In modern writing and printing, the paragraph, whether independent or connected, is marked off to the eye by the device known as *indenting*. In printed matter, the first letter of the paragraph is set back one *em*, or two *ems*, from the flush line of the page or column. In writing, the first letter should be set back an inch or an inch and a half from the margin.

42. *The Independent Paragraph.*—This is practically a miniature essay. Whether long or short, whether made up of one sentence or of several sentences, it embodies all that the author intends to say on the subject.

Evidently, then, the independent paragraph should be distinguished by directness and conciseness; the writer should go straight to the point, should employ as few words as possible.

Paragraphs written for a newspaper may be left to the supervision of the editor, a person whose office it is to see that his contributors say the most in the fewest words. Further, the author by profession, Coleridge for example, may be

trusted to know the value of directness and conciseness. There is a class of independent paragraphs, however, which plays an all-important part in school and college life, yet which has never been adequately taught as a mode of composition. Namely, *answers to examination questions*.

At periodic intervals every school tests the proficiency of its scholars. The test consists in setting a number of questions to be answered in writing. If mathematics and translation be put aside, every answer to a question in other subjects, for example, in science, in history, in civics, in literature, and so on, is an independent paragraph which may range in length from thirty or forty to one hundred words or upward. What preparation, then, have the scholars for the writing of such paragraphs? Now, whatever answer the school may give officially to the question, those persons whose business it is to read and mark school papers will declare without hesitation that scarcely one scholar in ten knows how to compose a paragraph. Both school and college seem to be resting under the comfortable delusion that good writing is a matter which concerns the English department alone. Is not correct writing the business of everybody? Ought not every teacher to be a teacher of clear and coherent expression? Does even the English department accomplish all that it might in its own field? The following specimens may throw some light on the question. The first, which was written in school, not in examination but as a practice-exercise, betrays the writer's inability to think coherently. The second, written in examination, tells its story of a poorly trained writer going to pieces under pressure. To simplify matters, some mistakes in spelling have been corrected :

After his college education Milton retired to the country and put himself to the task of studying mathematics for five years [!]. Milton had never liked such subjects, and it showed a resolute spirit in him to grind on disagreeable work for so long a time. Living in the [country] acquired for him a love of nature that is essential for a true poet. Taking it all in all, I think that Milton was fully prepared to be a true poet.

What is the connection here between the beginning and the end?

Hector standing at the Scaean gate resolved to chance battle with Achilles. Achilles rushing on in his heavenly armor terrified Hector, and he grew afraid. Hector ran three times around Troy with Achilles following with approaching footsteps. Minerva strengthened Hector's courage, and he stopped to meet Achilles in battle. Minerva stood near Hector in the form of Deiphobus. Hector, thinking he had help, and as Achilles had thrown his spear, and missed he advanced boldly boasting. Hector threw a spear which rebounded from the shield of Achilles. Hector turned to obtain another spear from Deiphobus, but he had vanished. Achilles rushed on with his sword and struck Hector in the neck. Achilles exulted in Hector's death, and Hector prophesied [!] Achilles' death. Achilles drags Hector's body tied to his chariot-wheel three times around the halls of Troy.

Whatever of coherence there may be in this account of Hector's death is due to the Homeric story itself, not to the American's manner of retelling it. The subject is literary. Teachers of history and science will scarcely deny that they get equally bad paragraphs, if not worse, in their respective subjects.

The object of these remarks is to bring out the importance of the independent paragraph in education as a whole. Until this importance is felt and realized to the fullest extent, we shall fail to train writers or even thinkers. Thought without adequate expression is scarcely conclusive thinking. We cannot admit too promptly, we cannot act too promptly and too energetically on the admission, that the correct written formulation of one's ideas and facts is the life of all education.

The general features of paragraph-writing, discussed in the following pages under the several headings of Unity, Sequence, Topic Sentence, Sentence-Echo, Repeated Structure, and the like, belong to the independent paragraph. There are two exceptions, however: in the independent paragraph there can be no question of length-variation, neither can there be any Paragraph-Echo.

The directness and conciseness peculiar to the independent paragraph cannot be defined; they cannot even be explained. Yet they can be taught, and should be taught by every teacher.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE PARAGRAPH.

43. Preliminary Discussion.—The doctrine has been laid down that every paragraph “is subject to the general laws of unity, selection, proportion, sequence, and variety.”¹ This doctrine is open to criticism. In the first place, it is safer in discussing matters of writing to avoid the term “laws” and speak only of “principles.” In the next place, to rank selection, proportion, and variety with unity and sequence is not fair. *The only essential features of a paragraph are unity and sequence.* If these are observed, the paragraph will be good. When we make the paragraph a genuine unit, we necessarily select what is needful and reject everything else; also, we give to each part of the paragraph its due proportion. When we develop rigorously the sequence of a paragraph, we give to the paragraph all the variety that should be demanded of us. Any variety over and above that is the individual gift of the individual writer.

44. Unity.—A paragraph is a unit when everything in it bears directly upon the same topic or aspect of the general subject. For example:

A cornfield in July is a hot place. The soil is hot and dry; the wind comes across the lazily murmuring leaves² with a warm sickening smell drawn from the rapidly growing, broad-flung banners of the corn. The sun, nearly vertical, drops a flood of dazzling light and heat upon the field over which the cool shadows run, only to make the heat seem the more intense.—HAMLIN GARLAND.

Note how everything develops the feature of *heat*.

The following is from Scott's version, in *Kenilworth*, of the well-known story of Raleigh and the cloak. Note the rapidity

¹ Scott and Denney, *Paragraph Writing*, p. 4.

² For correction of sentence-structure see § 21.

and directness of the movement, also how the few touches of description give to the whole an air of actuality :

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition at the signal of the Gentleman Pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the Queen's boat, where she sate beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies, and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the Queen's order apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come alongside, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the Queen's barge,¹ which he performed with graceful agility at the fore part of the boat, and was brought aft to the Queen's presence, the wherry at the same time dropping into the rear. The youth underwent the gaze of Majesty, not the less gracefully, that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The muddled cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the Queen introduced the conversation.

The following, in exposition, is a statement, by Curtis, of one aspect of the relation between party and State :

The first object of concerted political action is the highest welfare of the country. But the conditions of party association are such that the means are constantly and easily substituted for the end. The sophistry is subtle and seductive. Holding the ascendancy of his party essential to the national welfare, the zealous partisan merges patriotism in party. He insists that not to sustain the party is to betray the country, and against all honest doubt and reasonable hesitation and reluctance, he vehemently urges that quibbles of conscience must be sacrificed to the public good ; that wise and practical men will not be squeamish ; that every soldier in the army cannot indulge his own whims ; and that if the majority may justly prevail in determining the government, it must not be questioned in the control of a party.

The topic here is the wrongful identification of means (party) with end (country).

The following paragraphs, selected from school papers, will show what can be accomplished in school training. They are

¹ Scott's diction is open to criticism. He should have used the word "wherry" throughout in speaking of Raleigh's boat, and the word "barge" for the Queen's boat. Besides, why not have written : "and the young man was desired to step from *it* into the Queen's barge" ?

submitted, not as specimens of unimpeachable writing, but merely as exemplifying paragraph-unity.

* Sir Roger de Coverley, upon arriving in town, sent his coachman to announce his arrival to the Spectator. The Spectator seemed much surprised at the coachman's announcement, and immediately went to the old knight's room. Sir Roger was delighted to see him, and took up the greater part of the morning [in] telling of the happenings at home. The rest of the day was spent in discussing Prince Eugene, whom the knight was desirous of seeing.

* Some distance from the village there was an open tract of country. Here was gathered the entire tribe of the Delawares around the biers of Uncas and Cora. The body of Cora was covered with a cloak of leaves, and at her feet sat her father, while the other intimate friends were near by. Not far away was the body of Uncas, placed in a sitting posture and decked with all the finery which his rank required. Hawkeye and Chingachgook were here chief mourners. They stood looking steadfastly at the corpse, as if riveted to the spot.

* As one reads *The Princess*, there seem to be two direct purposes for which Ida established her college. One of these was to show woman's ability and quickness. Ida and her two companions, Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche, believed that women were as capable of learning as men; and they set about to prove this. All the higher branches of learning, which only men were wont to study, were taught in this college, and taught with a great [high?] degree of success, as both the Prince and Florian acknowledged. By this course of study Ida was to show to the world that women were as gifted as men and as capable of studying the higher branches.

Another [The other?] aim of the college was to show woman's independence of man, etc.

Paragraph-unity is violated by the introduction of matter which has no direct bearing upon the specific purpose of the paragraph. Such matter is called irrelevant. The habit of dragging in irrelevant matter is the mark of an undisciplined mind, and has often been ridiculed by satirists. For example:

Sir, she came in . . . , and longing—save your honor's reverence—for stewed prunes; sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit-dish, a dish of some threepence; your honors have seen such dishes; they are not china dishes, but very good dishes.—*Meas. for Meas.*, ii., 1.

Escalus interrupts with an impatient "Go to! go to! no matter for the dish, sir"; and every trained mind will echo Escalus.

Even writers of eminence occasionally mar the unity of a paragraph. For example:

Sextus Quintus was not of so generous and forgiving a temper. Upon his being made pope, the statue of Pasquin was one night dressed in a very dirty shirt, with an excuse written under it, that he was forced to wear foul linen because his laundress was made a princess. This was a reflection upon the pope's sister, who, before the promotion of her brother, was in those mean circumstances that Pasquin represented her [!]. As this pasquinade made a great noise in Rome, the pope offered a considerable sum of money to any person that should discover the author of it. The author, relying upon his Holiness's generosity, as also upon some private overtures which he had received from him, made the discovery himself; upon which the pope gave him the reward which he had promised, but, at the same time, to disable the satirist for the future, ordered his tongue to be cut out and both his hands to be chopped off. Aretine is too trite an instance. Every one knows that all the kings in Europe were his tributaries. Nay, there is a letter of his extant, in which he makes his boasts that he had laid the Sophy of Persia under contribution.—ADDISON: *Libels and Lampoons*.

Here the last three sentences, beginning with "Aretine," are wholly out of place. They have nothing to do with this paragraph, which treats of the cruelty of Pope Sextus Quintus. Aretine's conduct should be treated in a separate paragraph.

The following are specimens of faulty school-writing:

* The Squire was a tall, well-built man of about sixty years. *All the members of his family took their meals at different hours, but he was always the last one to eat.* His face was stern, but his mouth was feeble, and he seemed to be an easy-going man. His clothes did not appear to be very tidy, but that was on account of neglect and carelessness, and not for want of money. *He always had the best of wines, meats, and other things, and none of the villagers dared to dispute his opinion.* If the Squire had brought up his sons in a proper manner, they might have been the pride of the village rather than the disgrace.

The writer has confused hopelessly the personal appearance of the Squire, his habits, and the consequences of his conduct.

* When Molly started out for Raveloe on New Year's morning, the snow was falling and the thermometer was at the freezing-point. But she had a purpose in making this long journey, and she thought if she became cold she could rest for a few hours under some shed. When she reached Raveloe she intended to go immediately to Squire Cass and inform him that she was his eldest son's wife. *Molly had been handsome when younger, but she had acquired the opium habit, and she now looked like a woman of fifty.*

Molly's degraded appearance and the impression her coming would undoubtedly make upon Squire Cass are too significant to be tacked on to a paragraph of simple narration. They should form a separate paragraph.

The following is wholly without unity :

* The Vicar was cast into prison for the non-payment of his debts, and, upon his arrival there, his feelings were somewhat different from any man who had ever been lawfully detained there before. One of the first acquaintances that he made was of a man by the name of Jenkinson. This man had once upon a time swindled the minister, and now he tried to retrieve the wrong by doing many a kindness. Moses, the son of the Vicar, worked as a day laborer, and, by so doing, supported the family that had taken lodgings in a small house that stood near by.

45. Sequence.¹—The paragraph may be compared to a chain made up of links varying in size and shape. These links, that is, the sentences, should fit into each other ; each link is to bear its share of the general strain. If any one link is defective, the whole chain is to that extent defective ; if a link is badly shaped or out of place, the chain becomes kinked.

By sequence we mean this. The thought of one sentence should *continue* the thought of the sentence preceding and *suggest* the thought of the sentence following. Each sentence should thus point backward and forward. The general movement of the paragraph should be *gliding*, free from everything like a jerk or a halt, a jump forward or a hurrying back to pick up some overlooked fact or idea. In the language of Professor A. S. Hill : ²

¹ Sometimes called Continuity or Coherence.

² *The Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 306.

A paragraph should be so constructed as to enable a reader to get from sentence to sentence with as little friction as possible.

The following paragraph, from some remarks on the dangers of card-playing, will illustrate the principle :

Young men should govern themselves strictly in this thing. Don't play in the cars ; gamblers do, gentlemen as a rule do not. Never play in public places ; it is the just mark of a loafer. Refuse to devote whole evenings to whist ; life is too short and books are too near. Rate the whole matter low, and have such uses for your time and faculties that you can say to all, I have other matters to attend to.—MUNGER : *On the Threshold*.

The following will illustrate rapid narration :

We rode over Castlewood Downs before the breaking of dawn. We passed the very spot where the car was upset fourteen years since, and Mohun lay. The village was not yet up, nor the forge lighted, as we rode through it,¹ passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. We got off our horses at the bridge and walked up to the gate.—THACKERAY : *Henry Esmond*, chap. xiii.

The following is descriptive :

The door, which moved with difficulty on its creaking and rusty hinges, being forced open, a square and sturdy little urchin became apparent, with cheeks as red as an apple. He was clad rather shabbily (but, as it seemed, more owing to his mother's carelessness than his father's poverty), in a blue apron, very wide and short trousers, shoes somewhat out at the toes, and a chip-hat, with the frizzles of his curly hair sticking through its crevices. A book and a small slate, under his arm, indicated that he was on his way to school. He stared at Hepzibah a moment, as an elder customer than himself would have been likely enough to do, not knowing what to make of the tragic attitude and queer scowl wherewith she regarded him.—HAWTHORNE : *Seven Gables*, chap. iii.

The following are obviously faulty :

* (1) Major Heyward came upon Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas. After having told them that he had lost his way in the forest he

(1) Coming upon Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas, Major Heyward told them how he had lost his way in the forest and asked

¹ Why did not Thackeray suppress this awkward *it* ? See § 20 ; also § 48.

asked their aid. (2) Magua, who recognized Hawkeye and the Indians, escaped now while he had the chance. (3) Hawkeye told the Major that Magua was probably leading him into a trap, etc.

* In the midst of this revelry there came a knock upon the door. The Friar quickly put all signs of the feast away and then told the knocker to be gone. He soon opened the door, learning that it was Locksley knocking, and bade him enter.

*(1) When Cedric and his train were captured in the forest, Gurth and Wamba escaped. (2) They were discovered by Locksley, to whom they told the misfortunes of Cedric. (3) The prisoners were conveyed to Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Boeuf. (4) Locksley collected as great a force as possible, in order to attack the castle and rescue the prisoners.

*(1) David, exposing himself carelessly, was wounded by a shot fired from the opposite shore. Then the party knew that their hiding-place was discovered. (2) Their powder being exhausted, Uncas was sent to the boat to get some more. He was surprised to find that the boat had been carried off by the enemy. (3) They had one or two encounters with the Hurons, in which they were successful, but when they saw that the boat was gone, they gave up all hope of escape, etc.

their aid. (2) Hawkeye told the Major that Magua must be leading him into a trap. (3) Magua, who recognized Hawkeye and the Indians, now made his escape while he had the chance.

In the midst of this revelry there was a loud knock upon the door. Hurriedly putting away all evidences of the feast, the Friar told the visitor to be gone. Learning, however, that it was Locksley who was knocking, he immediately opened the door and bade him enter.

(1) When Cedric and his train were attacked and captured in the forest, Gurth and Wamba were the only ones who escaped. (2) The prisoners were conducted to Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Boeuf. (3) Meanwhile Gurth and Wamba, meeting Locksley, told him of the misfortune which had befallen Cedric. (4) Locksley collected as large a force as possible, in order to attack the castle and rescue the prisoners.

(1) David, exposing himself carelessly, was wounded by a shot from the opposite shore. Then the party knew that their hiding-place was discovered. (2) They had one or two encounters with the Hurons, in which they were successful. (3) Their powder becoming exhausted, Uncas was sent to the boat to get some more. To his surprise he found that the boat had been carried off by the enemy. At the news of this loss the party now gave up all hope of escape, etc.

Even writers of eminence occasionally fail to observe strict sequence. For example :

The picture was a delicate one. Woman's prescriptive infirmity had stalked into the sunlight, which had invested it with the freshness of an originality. A cynical inference was irresistible by Gabriel Oak as he regarded the scene, generous though he fain would have been. There was no necessity whatever for her looking in the glass.

The picture was a delicate one. Woman's prescriptive infirmity had stalked into the sunlight, which had invested it with the freshness of an originality. Overlooking the scene, Gabriel Oak, generous though he fain would have been, could not help drawing a cynical inference. There was no necessity whatever for her looking in the glass.

The true sequence is : 1. A peculiar scene (a pretty young woman, in the early morning, seated on top of a wagonload of furniture and contemplating herself in a hand-mirror). 2. An unsuspected observer. 3. His inference. The order in the original paragraph is 1, 3, 2.

Macaulay, who is usually careful in the matter of paragraph-unity, does not always maintain the best continuity. The following is from his account of the Battle of the Boyne :¹

The first of July dawned, a day which has never since returned without exciting strong emotions of very different kinds in the two populations which divide Ireland. The sun rose bright and cloudless. Soon after four both armies were in motion. William ordered his right wing, under the command of Meinhart Schomberg, one of the Duke's sons, to march to the bridge of Slane, some miles up the river, to cross there, and to turn the left flank of the Irish army. Meinhart Schomberg was assisted by Portland and Douglas. *James, anticipating some such design, had already sent to the bridge a regiment of dragoons, commanded by Sir Neil O'Neil.* O'Neil behaved himself like a brave gentleman ; but he soon received a mortal wound ; his men fled, and the English right wing passed the river.

The sentence here italicized breaks the continuity of narrative. After joining King William at four in the morning and marching with Schomberg for two or three hours, the

¹ The Boyne is a small stream running from west to east ; King William was on the north bank, King James on the south. In the latitude of North Ireland, on July 1, there is full daylight at four in the morning.

reader is asked to join King James at four and march with O'Neil. Macaulay would have obviated this countermarching had he restricted all his principal statements to Schomberg's attack and reduced the mention of King James to a subordinate statement. Thus :

. . . Meinhart Schomberg was assisted by Portland and Douglas. *At the bridge Schomberg encountered Sir Neil O'Neil and a regiment of dragoons which King James had sent thither in anticipation of some such flanking movement.* O'Neil behaved himself like a brave gentleman, etc.

There is another instance of break in continuity in Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings :

Nor must we forget that all, or almost all, to whom, when placed at the head of affairs, he could apply for assistance, were persons who owed as little as himself, or less than himself, to education. *A minister in Europe finds himself, on the first day on which he commences his functions, surrounded by experienced public servants, the depositaries of official traditions.* Hastings had no such help. His own reflection, his own energy, were to supply the place of all Downing Street and Somerset House.

While reading of Hastings in *India*, we are suddenly confronted with a minister in *Europe*. By a very slight change Macaulay could have made his thought continuous :

. . . or less than himself, to education. *Unlike a minister in Europe, who finds himself . . . official traditions, Hastings had no one to turn to for help.* His own reflection, etc.

The worst break of continuity in Macaulay is to be found in his criticism of Addison's poem, *The Campaign*. It begins thus :

The "Campaign" came forth, and was as much admired by the public as by the minister. It pleases us less on the whole than the "Epistle to Halifax." Yet it undoubtedly ranks high among the poems which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the dawn of Pope's genius. The chief merit of the "Campaign," we think, is that which was noticed by Johnson, the manly and rational rejection of fiction. The first great poet whose works have come down to us sang of war long before war became a science or a trade. If, in his time, etc.

and so on for over a page, all in one paragraph and all about the heroes of Greek epic poetry. Then follows a paragraph

upon the early and late imitators of Homer. Then the third paragraph opens :

Addison, with excellent sense and taste, departed from this ridiculous fashion, etc.

Such treatment violates every principle of paragraphing, ignores not only sequence but unity. Macaulay should have cast his remarks upon Homeric poetry in a separate paragraph. Further, he should have marked the transition from *The Campaign* to Homer by some explanatory phrase. Lastly, he should have defined "fiction." Certainly a poet without any fiction is scarcely a poet. Macaulay meant "conventional" fiction. The break might be reconstructed thus :

. . . The chief merit of the "Campaign," we think, is that which was noticed by Johnson, the manly and rational rejection of *conventional* fiction.

This fiction has been handed down from the first great poet, from Homer, who sang of war long before war became, etc.

In view of the prominence given to Macaulay in the English programme of our preparatory schools, it is not superfluous to warn the scholars against his faults. Nor is it superfluous to add that in paragraphing and sentence-structure Burke is greatly his superior.

46. The Topic Sentence.—This is a corollary of paragraph-unity. The doctrine of the topic-sentence has been formulated thus :

Every paragraph should have a clearly defined idea, to the development of which each sentence contributes. This idea is usually expressed definitely and unmistakably in one of the sentences of the paragraph, called the topic-sentence. The topic-sentence is generally most effective when short and striking. It is often found to be, however, not a whole sentence in itself, but only a part of a sentence, what precedes being obviously preparatory to its more forcible presentation. Sometimes the topic-sentence need not be expressed definitely. In such a paragraph the topic is implied in all that is said. The test of a good paragraph of this kind is the possibility of phrasing the main idea, which it contains, in a single sentence. Whether expressed or implied, therefore, the topic-sentence should exist as a working-theme in the mind of the writer while

constructing each sentence, and the bearing of each sentence on the paragraph-theme should be clear and distinct.¹

This formulation is in itself perfectly correct and, to the trained mind, perfectly clear and adequate. The untrained mind, however, will probably find the formulation abstruse, and desire something more concrete and a simpler wording.

1. The topic-sentence, in the strict sense, is demanded only in argumentation and exposition. In argumentation, which is proving a certain proposition, we must of necessity state unmistakably that which we are trying to prove. For example :

First, sir, permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again ; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.—BURKE : *Conciliation*.

Exposition is merely explaining or making clear a general fact or relation, a law or a principle. Here, too, we must state unmistakably that which we are trying to make clear. For example :

In discussing the savage character, writers have been too prone to indulge in vulgar prejudices and passionate exaggeration, instead of the candid temper of true philosophy. They have not sufficiently considered the peculiar circumstances in which the Indians have been placed, and the peculiar principles under which they have been educated. *No being acts more rigidly from rule than the Indian.* His whole conduct is regulated according to some general maxims early implanted in his mind. The moral laws that govern him are, to be sure, but few, but then he conforms to them all ; the white man abounds in laws of religion, morals, and manners, but how many of them does he violate ?—IRVING : *Traits of Indian Character*.

2. Narrative and Description, on the other hand, lend themselves less readily to topic-sentences. In truth it may be questioned whether a paragraph of *genuine* narration or description always admits of a *genuine* topic-sentence. Are we usually able to compress into a single sentence a series of incidents, a

¹ Scott and Denney, *Paragraph Writing*, p. 19.

group of details? The reader may compare the paragraph on a Cornfield in July, § 44; the Raleigh incident, § 44; the Little Urchin, § 45.

Nevertheless, even in the most genuine narrative and description, a good writer, while observing the strictest sequence, will nearly always make some incident or feature more conspicuous than the rest. A phrase, a sentence, occasionally more than one sentence, will stand out against the body of the paragraph as against a background.

Such prominent phrases and sentences may be called Paragraph-Centres, or Key Sentences. Usually they will be found to embody a reflection, a general observation. For example :

He was a tight brisk little man, with the air of an arrant old bachelor. His nose was shaped like the bill of a parrot; his face slightly pitted with the small-pox, with a dry perpetual bloom on it, like a frost-bitten leaf in autumn. He had an eye of great quickness and vivacity, with a drollery and lurking waggy of expression that was irresistible. *He was evidently the wit of the family*, dealing very much in sly jokes and innuendoes with the ladies, and making infinite merriment by harping upon old themes; which, unfortunately, my ignorance of the family chronicles did not permit me to enjoy. It seemed to be his great delight during supper to keep a young girl next to him in a continual agony of stifled laughter, in spite of her awe of the reproving looks of her mother, who sat opposite. Indeed, *he was the idol of the younger part of the company*, who laughed at everything he said or did, and at every turn of his countenance; I could not wonder at it, for *he must have been a miracle of accomplishments* in their eyes. He could imitate Punch and Judy; make an old woman of his hand, with the assistance of a burnt cork and pocket handkerchief; and cut up an orange into such a ludicrous caricature that the young folks were ready to die with laughing.—IRVING: *Christmas Eve*.

It was the very witching time of night that¹ Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travel homewards along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cherrily in the afternoon. *The hour was as dismal as himself*. Far below him, the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush of night he could even hear the barking of the watch dog, etc.—IRVING: *Sleepy Hollow*.

¹ Irving is much given to using "that" for "when."

But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. *It was*¹ an apparition from that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street, behind the goodly ornamented façade that meets the sunlight and the gaze of respectable admirers. *It was his own child carried in Silas Marner's arms.* That was his instantaneous impression, unaccompanied by doubt, though he had not seen the child for months past; and when the hope was rising that he might possibly be mistaken, Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Lammeter had already advanced to Silas, in astonishment at this strange advent. Godfrey joined them immediately, unable to rest without hearing every word—trying to control himself, but conscious that if any one noticed him, they must see that he was white-lipped and trembling.—GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*.

The following paragraph, in which Irving describes Dick Waldron's courtship, is peculiarly instructive:

This youngster gradually became an intimate visitor of the family. *He talked little, but he sat long.* He filled the father's pipe when it was empty, gathered up the mother's knitting-needle or ball of worsted when it fell to the ground, stroked the sleek coat of the tortoise-shell cat, and replenished the teapot for the daughter from the bright copper kettle that sang before the fire. All these quiet little offices may seem of trifling import; but when true love is translated into Low Dutch, it is in this way that it eloquently expresses itself. They were not lost upon the Webber family, etc.—*Wolfert Webber*.

The paragraph would have been complete in structure without the italicized sentence. These few words add little or nothing to the detail of the picture. Yet what would the paragraph be without them? They give the very spirit of the scene; like a flash of sunlight across a landscape, they reveal everything.

47. Principal Places in the Paragraph.—In § 27 the principal places in the sentence were said to be the beginning and the end, especially the end. The doctrine of the sentence, however, cannot be applied rigorously, or even generally, to the paragraph. We cannot say of the paragraph that the beginning should always or even usually be striking; that the end should always or usually be the most striking

¹ Italicized in the original.

part. The paragraph is not only a larger unit than the sentence, but is also much more *elastic and variable*. In truth, whereas sentences should conform to a certain regularity or type of structure, each paragraph is a law unto itself.

The assertion can be tested by a study of the paragraphs cited in §§ 45, 46, from good writers. The most striking sentences will be found at various places in the paragraph.

In general we need not go beyond saying that the beginning sentence of the paragraph ought to be conspicuous enough to catch the reader's attention, and the final sentence ought to enforce the paragraph as a whole. Further, it is advisable, though not necessary, to make the beginning sentence short; the concluding sentence may be long or short, but at all events should be forcible.

If the paragraph opens with a topic sentence, or something closely resembling a topic-sentence, a good writer will frequently make the paragraph conclude with a restatement, or counterpart, or application of the opening. If the paragraph opens literally, a good writer will not infrequently make it end with a figurative expression. These two features are sufficiently illustrated in the following examples:

Boswell has already been much commented upon; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation than of true recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world; confessed that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety; of which latter as he gained far more than seemed his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived and had bed and board in the British Islands, this man has provided us a greater pleasure than any other individual at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves; perhaps has done us a greater service than can be specially attributed to more than two or three: yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell exists; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copyright went) was not excessive; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him. *Men are unwiser than children; they do not know the hand that feeds them.*—CARLYLE: *Boswell's Johnson*.

It is probable that Addison, when he sent across St. George's Channel

his first contributions to the *Tatler*, had no notion of the extent and variety of his own powers. He was the possessor of a vast mine, rich with a hundred ores. But he had been acquainted only with the least precious part of his treasures, and had hitherto contented himself with producing sometimes copper and sometimes lead, intermingled with a little silver. All at once, and by mere accident, he had lighted on an inexhaustible vein of the finest gold.—MACAULAY: *Addison*.

The peculiar gifts of the great writers, Macaulay, Carlyle, and others, cannot always be imitated by the young. The young writer will do well to concentrate his energies upon the observance of these few principles:

1. That every paragraph is a unit—has a purpose or “theme” of its own; this theme should be ever-present to the mind of the writer.

2. That everything in the paragraph should bear directly upon this theme. Whatever does not bear directly upon the theme does not belong in the paragraph.

3. That every paragraph should contain at least one sentence or phrase which stands out from the rest of the paragraph, and either tells the theme in so many words or illuminates it.

48. Sentence-echo.—At several places in Chapter II. the student’s attention was called to the importance of word-order and phrase-order for clearness and force of sentence-structure; see §§ 22, 27, 28, 31. Those sections should be restudied in connection with the present section; for indeed we cannot fully understand the sentence unless we know how it is to be modified to suit the paragraph.

The most useful device for connecting sentences and making the paragraph a continuous whole is the device called Echo. This consists in letting the beginning of the sentence echo the thought, sometimes even the wording, of the end of the sentence immediately preceding. For example:

I was roused from this fit of luxurious meditation by a shout from my little *travelling companions*. They had been looking out of the coach-windows for the last few miles, recognizing every tree and cottage as they approached home, and now there was a *general burst of joy*. “*There’s*

John ! and there's old Carlo ! and there's Bantam !" cried the happy little rogues, clapping their hands.—IRVING : *The Stage-coach*.

If we adopt this mode, if we mean to conciliate and concede, let us see of what nature the concession ought to be : to ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their *complaint*. The colonists *complain* that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They *complain* that they are taxed in a parliament in which they are not represented.—BURKE : *Conciliation*.

The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power ; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to *awaken in us* a wonderfully full, new, and intimate *sense* of them, and of our relations with them. *When this sense is awakened in us*, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, etc.—MATTHEW ARNOLD : *Poetry and Science*.

If a man, such as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the ministerial changes. But with *these* he would interperse the details which are the charm of historical romances.—MACAULAY : *Study of History*.

When the two parties were thus in a state of distrust and irritation, the least spark was sufficient to set them in a flame. The Indians, having weapons in their hands, grew mischievous, and committed various *petty depredations*. In one of their *maraudings* a warrior was fired on and *killed by a settler*. *This was the signal* for open hostilities ; the Indians pressed to revenge the death of their comrade, and the alarm of war resounded through the Plymouth colony.—IRVING : *Philip of Pokanoket*.

Note, in these paragraphs, how all the qualities of good writing—unity, clearness, force, and ease—are developed by means of echo. In the following paragraphs note the difference between the structure without echo and the structure with.

... as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. We got off our horses at the bridge, and walked up to the gate.—THACKERAY. (See § 45.)

He aimed, in both his papers,

... as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. *At the bridge* we got off our horses, and walked up to the gate.

In both his papers he aimed to

to instruct and amuse. He tried to accomplish these ends by means of, etc.

Where was he [Johnson] to turn for daily bread? Even in those days most gates were barred with gold, and opened but to golden keys. The greatest chance for a poor man was probably through the Church.

instruct and to amuse. *These ends* he tried to accomplish by means of, etc.

Where was he to turn for daily bread? Even in those days most gates were barred with gold, and opened but to golden keys. *For a poor man* the greatest chance was probably through the Church.

Putting gold and poverty side by side heightens the contrast.

* Seeing the captain dead, they rushed up-stairs to rifle the chest. Their rage and astonishment knew no bounds when they found it already rifled.

* Kien Long, the Emperor of China, was on a hunting expedition during the latter part of August. He followed his game about two hundred miles from the Great Wall.

* Early in 1812 Napoleon crossed over into Russia with 400,000 men and 1200 cannon, in order to bring Alexander to terms. The Russians slowly retreated, etc.

* He persuaded Oubacha to meet him by a small stream some distance from the camp. Then he hired two men to go there and kill the Khan. Zebek was prevented from executing this atrocious design by a man named Weseloff.

* The principal scenes are laid in Sherwood Forest, at Ashby, York, and Coningsburgh. Scott's descriptions are very charming. We find that he was a lover of nature and a close observer.

Seeing the captain dead, they rushed up-stairs to rifle the chest. *When they found it already rifled*, their astonishment and rage [see § 29] knew no bounds.

During the latter part of August Kien Long, the Emperor of China, *was on a hunting expedition*. He followed his game about two hundred miles from the Great Wall.

Early in 1812, in order to bring Alexander to terms, Napoleon, with 400,000 men and 1200 cannon, *crossed over into Russia*. The Russians slowly retreated, etc.

He persuaded Oubacha to meet him by a small stream some distance from the camp. Then he hired two men to go there and kill the Khan. *In the execution of this atrocious design*, Zebek was prevented by a man named Weseloff.

The principal scenes are laid in Sherwood Forest, at Ashby, York, and Coningsburgh. Scott's descriptions are very charming. *They teach us* that he was a lover of nature and a close observer.

* They met Gamut, who told them that Cora was concealed in a cave, and that the Hurons were lying in ambush near by. Uncas and Hawkeye, on hearing this, separated, etc.

* Milton had many difficulties to undergo in order to become a great writer. He was unfortunate in love, and his political career was not at all smooth.

* Sir Roger bought the sermons of the best ministers. Consequently the people, although they did not have a good minister, had fine sermons to listen to.

They met Gamut, who told them that Cora was concealed in a cave, and that the Hurons were lying in ambush near by. *On hearing this*, Uncas and Hawkeye separated, etc.

In becoming a great writer Milton had *many difficulties to overcome*. He was unfortunate in love, and his political career was not at all smooth.

Sir Roger bought the sermons of the best preachers, *and directed the chaplain to read these sermons to the congregation*. Consequently the congregation, although it did not have a great preacher, had good sermons to listen to.

It would be scarcely possible to exaggerate the usefulness of echo, not merely for sequence but even for unity. Unless the paragraph is thoroughly a unit, the sentences cannot be thus hooked together. Conversely, where the echo is wrong, the paragraph as a whole is wrong. The following is a flagrant specimen of wrongdoing :

* Palamon and Arcite, two cousins, were found among the bodies of the Theban warriors. Creon, King of Thebes, had fought against Theseus, King of Athens, for the burial rites of the husbands of the Amazons. Theseus was victorious, and thus the widows received the *corpses of their husbands*. These *two youths* [!] were from Thebes, and Theseus imprisoned them for life.

Theseus, King of Athens, had fought against Creon, King of Thebes, for the burial rites of the husbands of the Amazons. Theseus was victorious and consequently the Amazons received the corpses of their husbands for burial. Among the dead bodies of the Theban warriors were found two cousins, Palamon and Arcite, still alive. These two young men Theseus ordered to be imprisoned for life.

Even in its reconstructed form the paragraph is far from good ; still, it is at least coherent.

Conditioned Statement ; Inversion.—In §§ 6, 31, the prin-

ciple was laid down that in a sentence of conditioned statement the member stating the condition *usually* precedes the member stating the consequence. To this principle we may now add another, namely, that in a sentence of unconditioned statement there is usually no inversion; that is to say, the object is not put before the verb, the verb is not put before the subject. Inversion is apt to make the sentence stiff and pedantic.

Both principles, however, are frequently to be disregarded in adjusting the sentence to the paragraph. For example:

* It was the dead of winter, the snow was piled high, the streams [were] ice-locked, when Sir Launfal came back from his quest, an old broken-down man. On reaching his castle, he found a stranger in possession, etc.

. . . there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty—and there is weariness and dissatisfaction *if the desire is baulked*. Now *in this desire* lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.—MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Literature and Science*.

But we should never understand the Puritans if we did not bear in mind that they were still prisoners in that religion of Fear which casts out Love. The nearness of God was oftener a terror than a comfort to them.—LOWELL: *New England*.

I gladly withdraw the offending phrase, and I am sorry for having used it; Mr. Wright, however, would perhaps be more indulgent to my vivacity, if he considered that we are none of us likely to be lively much longer. My vivacity is but the last sparkle of flame before we are all in the dark, the last glimpse of color before we all go into drab, etc.—MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Oxford and Philistinism*.

Inversion is illustrated in the following:

Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived; that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have.¹—MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Literature and Science*.

I set myself, therefore, resolutely to come at a real estimate of Emerson, and with a leaning even to strictness rather than to indulgence. That is

¹ The italics are in the original.

the safer course. Time has no indulgence; any veils of illusion which we may have left around an object because we loved it, Time is sure to strip away.—MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Emerson*.

I am not determining a point of law, I am restoring tranquillity; and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.—BURKE: *Conciliation*.

49. Paragraph-echo.—This consists in making the beginning of a paragraph echo the thought, and sometimes even the wording, of the conclusion of the paragraph immediately preceding. For example, in Swift's *Gulliver* the emperor of Lilliput has sent an envoy to Blefuscu to demand the return of Gulliver. The answer of the Emperor of Blefuscu is given in a second paragraph. The third begins thus:

With this answer the envoy returned to Lilliput, etc.

The connection between the two paragraphs would have been much less direct had Swift written:

The envoy returned with this answer, etc.

De Quincey, narrating his running away from school and his efforts to meet his sister, who was to act as peacemaker between him and the mother, ends one paragraph and begins the next thus:

. . . Not one minute had I waited, when in glided among the ruins—not my fair sister, but my bronzed *Bengal uncle*!

A *Bengal tiger* would not more have startled me, etc.—*Confessions*.

In the *Seven Gables* Hepzibah Pyncheon is expecting the return of her brother Clifford, but not so soon. The first paragraph ends:

During the latter process an omnibus came to a standstill under the branches of the elm tree. Hepzibah's heart was in her mouth. Remote and dusky . . . was that region of the Past whence her only guest might be expected to arrive. *Was she to meet him now?*

The next begins:

Somebody, at all events, was passing from the farthest interior of the omnibus toward its entrance. A gentleman alighted; but it was only to offer his hand to a *young girl* whose slender figure, nowise needing such

assistance, now lightly descended the steps . . . towards the House of the Seven Gables, etc.

This combination of paragraph-echo with the actual shock of surprise to Hepzibah is admirable. Note also the following :

. . . An unpaved street, drab-coloured, miserable, rotting wooden buildings, with the inevitable battlements—*the same, only worse, was the town.*

The same, only more beautiful still, was the majestic amphitheatre of green wooded hills that circled the horizon, etc.—HAMLIN GARLAND : *Main Travelled Roads.*

In his *Marble Faun* Hawthorne has introduced even a chapter-echo. Thus the second chapter ends :

“Miriam,” whispered Hilda, . . . “it is your model.”

The third chapter begins :

Miriam’s model has so important a connection, etc.

50. Repeated Structure.—Whoever studies carefully the style of good writers will perceive that they frequently employ, in two or more sentences in succession, the same rhetorical structure. The device, like echo, is very effective in maintaining the unity and sequence of the paragraph. In fact, repeated structure plays in the paragraph a part like that of stability of structure in the single sentence (see § 30). By means of repeated structure the paragraph acquires peculiar clearness, force, and dignity. For example :

Of books . . . you can hardly say the thing which ought to be taken amiss. But of men and women you dare not and must not tell all that chance may have revealed to you. *Sometimes* you are summoned to silence by pity. . . . *Sometimes* you are checked by the consideration . . . *Sometimes* the disclosure would cause quarrels. . . . *Sometimes* it would inflict pain. . . . *Sometimes*, again, . . . it might be difficult to prove. *Thus, for one cause or another*, some things are sacred, etc.—DE QUINCEY, *Wordsworth’s Poetry.*

The following is simpler : note the change from “the” to “their,” “they,” and the repetition of “Sunday.”

On this sacred day the gigantic monster is charmed into repose. *The* intolerable din and struggle of the week are at an end. *The* shops are

shut. *The fires of forges and manufactories are extinguished, and the sun, no longer obscured by murky clouds of smoke, pours down a sober yellow radiance into the quiet streets. The few pedestrians we meet, instead of hurrying forward with anxious countenances, move leisurely along; their brows are smoothed from the wrinkles of business and care; they have put on their Sunday looks and Sunday manners with their Sunday clothes, and are cleansed in mind as well as in person.*—IRVING: *Sunday in London.*

The young man himself lay back in the steamer chair. . . . *His hands . . . lay crossed upon a book in his lap. His body was wasted by sickness. . . . His face was still white and thin. . . . His scanty boyish beard . . . had not been trimmed. . . . His dark eyes bore the mark of recent suffering, etc.*—BRANDER MATTHEWS: *Spring in a Side Street.*

Repeated structure is peculiarly effective in oratory. By means of a repetition of sound the speaker not only strikes the listener's ear, but enables the listener's mind to follow. For example:

This, sir, *is my case. It is the case,* not merely of that humble institution, *it is the case* of every college in the land. *It is more. It is the case* of every eleemosynary institution throughout our country—of all those great charities formed by the piety of our ancestors, to alleviate human misery and scatter blessings along the pathway of life. *It is more. It is,* in some sense, *the case* of every man among us who has property of which he may be stripped, etc.—WEBSTER: *Dartmouth College.*

The following is from Burke's *Conciliation*:

If we adopt this mode,—*if we mean* to conciliate and concede,—let us see of what nature the concession ought to be. To ascertain the nature of our concession, *we must look* at their complaint. The colonies *complain* that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. *They complain* that they are taxed in a parliament in which they are not represented. *If you mean* to satisfy them at all, *you must* satisfy them with regard to this complaint. *If you mean* to please any people, *you must* give them the boon which they ask, etc.

Not every one is likely to compose after the manner of De Quincey or of Irving, of Webster, or of Burke. Yet a study of the style of these and other writers ought certainly to prevent blunders like the following:

* General Tilney had been doing General Tilney had been doing
all in his power to make Catherine's all in his power to make Catherine's

visit a pleasant one. (See § 26, 4.) She had been shown great respect and consulted on all sorts of things.

* Burns put his whole soul into his poetry when he did write. (See § 26, 4.) His poems were not written for effect but to express his own thoughts and feelings. He did not write for money or fame, but for love of the work.

* Another aim of the college was to show woman's independence of man. The teachers taught the students that, from the beginning, woman had been considered the inferior of man and had been treated as his slave. All this, *they* taught, was wrong; and, in its place, *they* said, separated from the rest of the world, *they* would prove *their* independence, they would show that woman could do many of the things which formerly were considered the sole right of man.

visit pleasant. He had shown her great respect and consulted her on all sorts of things.

Burns put his whole soul into his poetry. He did not write for effect, but to express his own thoughts and feelings. He did not write for money or for fame, but out of love of the work.

Another aim of the college was to demonstrate woman's independence of man. The students were taught that, from the beginning (of the world?), woman had been considered the inferior of man and treated as his slave. This, they were taught, was all wrong. Instead of this, they were taught that it was for them, secluded from the world, to prove their independence, to show that woman could do many of the things which were formerly considered the exclusive right of man.

In the original construction the pronoun "they" was ambiguous, referring first to teachers and then to students.

* In order that the loyalty which at that time was at its highest point might last as long as possible, the Royalists spread abroad exaggerated pictures of the virtues of Charles. He was described as possessing every attribute worthy of a king. But they concealed the many undesirable qualities which they hoped would pass away as he grew older.

In order that the loyalty which at that time was at its highest point might last as long as possible, the Royalists spread abroad exaggerated pictures of the virtues of Charles. They described him as possessing every attribute worthy of a king. But they concealed the many undesirable qualities which they hoped would pass away as he grew older.

The second sentence was perfectly correct in its original

form. Still, the paragraph as a whole is improved by the change.

51. Sentence-Connectives.—By sentence-connective is here meant a short expression having little or no significance of its own in a given sentence, and introduced in that sentence for the purpose of marking the connection with the preceding sentence. The connective may be a single word, or a phrase, or a brief sentence reduced to a parenthetical expression (compare § 28).

Connectives are of two general classes : copulative and disjunctive.

a. A copulative connective carries on the thought of the preceding sentence by way of addition, expansion, or illustration, or by way of stating cause and effect. Connectives of addition are :

Now ; also, too ; likewise ; besides ; again ; nor, in the sense of and not ; further, furthermore ; moreover ; yes, nay ; first, secondly, thirdly, etc. ; at last, at length, finally. As phrases or sentences : *add to this ; in like manner ; in fact, in truth ; in short ; to proceed, to return, to conclude ; as I have said before ; let me repeat, etc.*

Connectives denoting cause (reason) and effect (inference, consequence) are :

Else ; otherwise ; for ; then ; therefore ; so ; accordingly.

The word *thus* is somewhat ambiguous ; it may denote either an illustration (example) or an effect (inference).

Because, which formerly was used only to connect members of a sentence, is now establishing itself by the side of *for*.

b. The disjunctives are :

But ; however ; still ; yet ; nevertheless ; on the contrary ; on the other hand.

The expressions *thus far, hitherto*, are less strongly disjunctive than the others : still, they suggest at least a change of thought.

Whereas is used in two senses widely differing. In formal legal usage it is copulative ; it states the premises from which

a conclusion is drawn. Thus, in preparing resolutions the usual formula is: *Whereas . . . , whereas . . . , therefore* be it resolved, etc. In literary usage *whereas* expresses decided opposition or difference and resembles closely *on the other hand*.

In the use of connectives a few general points are to be carefully noted.

1. One and the same word may be either a connective or a simple adverb. For example :

On this statement, *then*, you may rely (connective).

I believed you *then* (adverb).

I think, *too*, that you are discontented (connective).

I think you are *too* selfish (adverb).

He promised, *however*, to reform (connective).

However much he promised, he did little (adverb).

2. The most difficult connectives to use are the disjunctive. The word "but" has been already discussed, § 39. In consequence of its excessive use the writer of to-day is apt to overlook the existence and function of the other disjunctives.

Properly used, "but" expresses direct opposition. For example :

Of books, so long as you rest only on grounds which, in sincerity, you believe to be true, and speak without anger or scorn, you can hardly say the thing which ought to be taken amiss. *But* of men and women you dare not, and must not, tell all that chance may have revealed to you.—
DE QUINCEY. [See § 50.]

It is not often, however, that we actually express direct *opposition*. Far more often we are seeking to express some *modification*, some reservation or qualification ; we concede up to a certain point, when we begin to retract or to give to the thought a different turn. For such modification or turn we should use "however," "still," "yet," "whereas."

Which of these four is the proper word in a given sentence cannot be taught by rule. One must study with the utmost care the practice of the best writers. For example :

Next, we know that parties must ever exist in a free country. We know, too, that the emulations of such parties . . . must send them all

in their turns to him that holds the balance of the state. The parties are the gamesters; *but* Government keeps the table, and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted than that Government will not be supplied. *Whereas*, whatever is got by acts of absolute power ill obeyed because odious, or by contracts ill kept because constrained, will be narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious.—BURKE.

The "Ode to Evening" [by Collins] is like a river which loses itself in the sand, *whereas* Gray's best poems have an evolution sure and satisfying.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Taylor's was a great and lovely mind; *yet* how much and injuriously was it perverted by his being a favourite and follower of Laud.—COLERIDGE.

Mr. — is, I suppose, one of the rising men of the day; *yet* he went on talking, the other evening, and making remarks with great earnestness, some of which were palpably irreconcilable with each other.—COLERIDGE.

Hawthorne's literary talent is of the first order. His subjects are generally not to me subjects of the highest interest; *but* his literary talent is of the first order, the finest, I think, which America has yet produced,—finer, by much, than Emerson's. *Yet* "Our Old Home" is not a masterpiece any more than "English Traits."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Meanwhile I was alone with his remains. His notion of their being transported to Caterham was of course impossible. *Still*, I did not like to leave an old acquaintance to the crows.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

His style has nothing Corinthian about it; its lightness and brightness make it almost Attic. It is not quite Attic, *however*; it has not the infallible sureness of Attic taste.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

3. The proper field for the employment of sentence-connectives is exposition, including argumentation. When we are trying to explain general facts and principles or to prove a point, we can scarcely be too particular in marking every stage and transition and shade of thought, *whereas* in simple description and narration sentence-connectives are apt to do more harm than good, by checking the rapidity of movement which is characteristic of good description and narration. The mere placing of two sentences side by side implies that they are intimately connected, that the features described or the incidents narrated follow one the other.

52. Sentence-Length.—The question whether sentences

should be long or short can be properly discussed only from the point of view of the paragraph. In itself, a sentence is not to be pronounced faulty because it is long, or correct because it is short; whether long or short, *it is correct if it embodies a unit of thought* (see §§ 10-18), and is also clear, forcible, and easy. On the other hand, sentences should vary in length to correspond to the alternations of thought in the paragraph. The human mind is not a machine, moving at an unvarying speed; it is an organism, and therefore, like all other organisms, its movements must be alternately rapid and slow. At times the mind hastens from point to point with eager rapidity; then the sentences will be naturally short, abrupt, direct. At other times the mind pauses to deliberate, to meditate, to sum up; then the sentences will be long, deliberate, and involved.

The following is the concluding paragraph of Macaulay's essay on Addison:

It is strange that neither his opulent and noble widow nor any of his powerful and attached friends should have thought of placing even a simple tablet, inscribed with his name, on the walls of the Abbey. It was not until three generations had laughed and wept over his pages that the omission was supplied by the public veneration. At length, in our own time, his image, skillfully graven, appeared in the Poets' Corner. It represents him, as we can conceive him, clad in his dressing-gown and freed from his wig, stepping from his parlor at Chelsea into his trim little garden, with the account of the Everlasting Club or the Loves of Hilpa and Shalum, just finished for the next day's Spectator, in his hand. Such a mark of national respect was due to the unsullied statesman, to the accomplished scholar, to the master of pure English eloquence, to the consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist, who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it; who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform; and who reconciled wit and virtue after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy, and virtue by fanaticism.

The following is from the conclusion of Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings:

With all his faults—and they were neither few nor small—only one cemetery was worthy to contain his remains. In that temple of silence

and reconciliation where the enmities of twenty generations lie buried, in the Great Abbey which has during many ages afforded a quiet resting-place to those whose minds and bodies have been shattered by the contentions of the Great Hall [of parliament], the dust of the illustrious accused should have mingled with the dust of the illustrious accusers. This was not to be. Yet the place of interment was not ill chosen. Behind the chancel of the parish church of Daylesford, in earth which already held the bones of many chiefs of the house of Hastings, was laid the coffin of the greatest man who has ever borne that ancient and widely extended name. On that very spot probably, fourscore years before, the little Warren, meanly clad and scantily fed, had played with the children of ploughmen. Even then his young mind had revolved plans which might be called romantic. Yet, however romantic, it is not likely that they had been so strange as the truth. Not only had the poor orphan retrieved the fallen fortunes of his line. Not only had he repurchased the old lands, and rebuilt the old dwelling. He had preserved and extended an empire. He had founded a polity. He had administered government and war with more than the capacity of Richelieu. He had patronized learning with the judicious liberality of Cosmo. He had been attacked by the most formidable combination of enemies that ever sought the destruction of a single victim; and over that combination, after a struggle of ten years, he had triumphed. He had at length gone down to his grave in the fulness of age in peace, after so many troubles; in honor, after so much obloquy.

The person who can read these lines without recognizing and sympathizing with the alternations in the movement of Macaulay's spirit must be hopelessly obtuse. Peculiarly interesting, in the last passage, is the combination of repeated structure ("He had") with the gradual lengthening of sentence and deepening of thought toward the close.

That length of sentence is wholly compatible with clearness, force, and ease may be further illustrated by two examples. The first, from Hawthorne's *Wakefield*, contains forty-two words:

Amid the throng of a London street, we distinguish a man, now waxing elderly, with few characteristics to attract careless observers, yet bearing, in his whole aspect, the handwriting of no common fate, for such as have the skill to read it.

The second, from Matthew Arnold, *The Function of Criti-*

cism, containing eighty-five words, has been already quoted (end of § 6).

Compare these with the following school-boy English :

* Milton was born in the year 1608. He died in 1674. He was born in London.

* Force used as a means of bringing the colonies to submission would be only temporary. Former cases had proved it. For example, Ireland. Another thing, force was uncertain. The uncertainty of using force was one of Burke's chief arguments. After force there remained nothing.

Or with the following bit of "journallese" :

I unwittingly introduce the practice of arriving at the Hotel Rafael by the six-thirty from town.

One is expected by the five-ten.

Fashion travels at that hour, or something earlier, perhaps. But later, never.

After the five-ten, the curfew.

Here not only is each sentence painfully abrupt, but each sentence is erected into the dignity of a paragraph (see § 54). The individual statements are clear in the sense that they are intelligible. Are they anything more? Is not the whole a manifestation of vulgarity trying to appear "smart" ?

When it is asserted that modern style is opposed to long sentences, the assertion is true only to this extent : Modern cultured readers do object to the intolerable and shapeless sentences of the garrulous narrative writers of the sixteenth century, also to the excessively involved sentences of Milton and other controversialists of the seventeenth century, sentences more Ciceronian than English in their structure. Further, brisk narration should, as a matter of course, be in the form of short, crisp sentences. Only we are to bear in mind that narration is not always brisk ; sometimes it is deliberate, sometimes even intentionally retarding, in order to introduce the element of suspense. In description, it is better to make sentences short rather than long ; a long descriptive sentence, however, if not too involved, is always proper for summing up. Lastly, the use of short sentences is largely a matter of temperament ; it is perhaps more a matter of temperament than

of deliberate choice. A man of quick wit or of incisive energy, urged along by the sense of many responsibilities, will instinctively express himself in short detached sentences. Even the early seventeenth century could exhibit such a man in the person of Bacon. A century later, Swift, the embodiment of nervous energy, wrote, when at his best, only short sentences; at least his long sentences are seldom perfectly happy in structure. Addison, also, was at his best only in short sentences, though from an impulse different from that which governed Swift; for Addison in writing wished merely to echo the manner of polite society, which tolerates nothing very long.

From the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, again, long sentences, at least sentences of moderate length, became more common, *e. g.*, in Johnson and Goldsmith, in Burke and Gibbon, in the historians, philosophers, essayists, and critics, in the prose of such poets as Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley. In fact, the period from 1750-1850 is marked by artistic sense and moderation; sentences are not too long, nor are they too often long; above all, there is an agreeable alternation of long sentences and short.

Since 1850, however, a disposition to favor the short sentence is noticeable. This is due usually to the growth of the "journalistic" manner of looking at and treating everything. The young in school and in college should be trained on other lines. They should be taught, negatively, that they need not look upon themselves as embryonic reporters and editors; positively, that they are to become thinkers. Now, all thinking involves the two extremes: the ability to go to the point at a leap; the ability to pause, to look backward and forward, to survey and forecast. He who is unable to sum up and forecast in a clear, forcible, easy sentence of reasonable length, is not a good writer, for he is not a sound thinker. In the words of Coleridge, he affects

a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented

for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable asthma of a shortwitted intellect.

There is a story to the effect that the English historian Freeman,¹ happening to visit an American class-room while an exercise in composition was going on, interrupted the teacher, who was trying to make a young woman understand how to render her English clearer. "Tell her," he exclaimed, "to write short sentences." Freeman might better have exclaimed: Tell her to write *correct* sentences, whether long or short. When a long sentence is bad, the badness is due not to the length but to the lack of unity, to the misplacing of words and clauses. Such faults the good teacher will cure; the teacher who is unable to cure them is not good. The school that is able to produce only short sentences is on the road to decay. If the scholar wishes to learn how to compose long sentences, he must examine critically the sentence-length of the best writers.

53. Paragraph-Length.—This is even less determinable than sentence-length. By its very nature a paragraph represents a portion of the general subject. The length of the paragraph, then, will depend upon the significance of this particular portion compared with the other portions. What that significance may be, no general rule can determine. In truth, the question of paragraph-length belongs properly under Composition-Draughting. Still, a few suggestions will be of service:

1. *Make your paragraphs short rather than long.* This is different from writing uniformly short sentences (see § 52). The paragraph is much more *plastic* than the sentence. It can be expanded, it can also be divided. If you find that a paragraph is too short, you can expand by the insertion of additional items bearing directly on this particular portion of the subject. If you find that a paragraph is growing unwieldy, you can cut it in two, connecting the new paragraphs

¹ See Hill, *Foundations of Rhetoric*, p. 288.

by some words of transition, to show that the two, though separated, are intimately connected.

The modern tendency is to keep the paragraph within the limits of the printed page. The eye, and with it the mind, likes to rest at least once in the page on the typographical break called the indentation (see § 41). We have become so accustomed to these rests that the sight of an unbroken page is apt to make us impatient.

Moreover, in modern printing, every speech spoken by one of the characters in a story, however short the speech may be, even if it contains only a word or two, is set up as a paragraph. If the speech is long, it may be set up in several paragraphs. Every novel of the day abounds in this dialogue-paragraphing.

Disregarding dialogue-paragraphing as something peculiar, and restricting ourselves to continuous composition, we may, in the most general terms, regard every paragraph as long, if it exceeds 300 words; as short, if it falls below 150.

A study of the first 25 paragraphs of Macaulay's second essay on Chatham¹ shows plainly that the great essayist seldom indulged in a long paragraph. The line-numbers of these 25 paragraphs run :

16, 8, 4, 22, 16, 25, 9, 12, 23, 23, 10, 17, 21, 50, 19, 6, 10, 4, 10, 23, 17, 13, 10, 9, 10.

The average line-length is $10\frac{1}{2}$ words. Thus we see that of these 25 paragraphs only one contains 500 words; seven contain between 200 and 300; the remaining 17 do not average 150 words. Of these 17 two contain exactly 39 and 38 words. The long 50-line paragraph describes the partition of powers between Pitt and Newcastle; it is shared almost evenly between the two statesmen. Though long, it is easily grasped.

2. A paragraph of 300 words, then, is long; one of 200 words begins to be long. These figures, however, apply only

¹ The text here followed is that of O. A. Lester. New York: Maynard & Co. The line-numbers will differ somewhat, of course, in other texts, but his ratio of line to word will be available for any text.

to printed matter of permanent value. For the ephemeral written matter of school and college work they ought to be reduced considerably. The young writer ought never to attempt a paragraph of 500 words; he has neither matter enough nor skill enough. His long paragraph ought not to run much over 200 words, and his average paragraph-length ought to be under rather than over 100 words. His very short paragraphs, however, cannot of course fall below those of Macaulay; every paragraph of less than 40 words is decidedly short, whether written by Macaulay or by X. Y. Z.

This conception of paragraph-length may appear to some critics too mechanical. Undoubtedly it is mechanical. On the other hand, we ought to admit very frankly that all school and college writing is necessarily more or less mechanical. This writing is not the spontaneous expression of a mind vitally interested in the subject; it is writing produced to order,—writing not for its own sake, but as a means to the mastery of the technique of written expression. Now the technique of writing, like the technique of other arts—like the technique of music or drawing—can be acquired only through the patient application of certain mechanical rules. To master the technique of paragraphing means to learn how to avoid tediousness—how to turn briskly from one portion of the subject to the next.

3. *Contrast good paragraphing with poor.* Contrast, for example, the manner of Macaulay with the manner of George Eliot. The latter, in *Silas Marner*, tells in one long paragraph, three pages in length, the sale and killing of Wildfire, Dunstan Cass's walk back to Raveloe, and his entering Marner's cottage. There is matter enough for eight or ten paragraphs. Contrast also Macaulay with De Quincey. The latter, in his *Revolt of the Tartars*, indulges in excessively long paragraphs. Two contain about 1000 words each, and a third is almost as long; several others are but little shorter. The average length is more than twice that of Macaulay.

54. The Link-Paragraph.—This is a paragraph—usually

a very short one—the object of which is to give prominence to a certain aspect or turn of the discourse. It has also been called a *Directive* or a *Transitional* Paragraph.

Sometimes the link-paragraph gives weight and solemnity to a thought when first introduced, and suggests its significance for the future. For example, Hawthorne, after narrating the festivities for opening the house, and the startling discovery of the owner, Colonel Pyncheon, sitting dead in his chair, inserts this short paragraph :

Thus early had that one guest—the only guest who is certain, at one time or another, to find his way into every dwelling,—thus early had Death stepped across the threshold of the House of the Seven Gables.

At other times the link-paragraph recalls from a digression. For example, in Chapter XV. of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hepzibah, goaded to frenzy, pours out her full wrath upon the Judge. Then follow several pages, taken up with an analysis of his character, past and present. Then comes this short paragraph, recalling us to the present situation :

But our affair now is with Judge Pyncheon as he stood confronting the fierce outbreak of Hepzibah's wrath. Without premeditation, to her own surprise and indeed terror, she had given vent for once to the inveteracy of her resentment, cherished against this kinsman for thirty years.

Again, the link-paragraph may sum up the preceding paragraphs and lead on to the following. For example, Macaulay, in his *Chatham*, after speaking of the proposed revival of royal authority, inserts the following :

Absurd as this theory was, it had many followers, particularly among men of letters. It was now to be reduced to practice ; and the result was, as any man of sagacity must have foreseen, the most piteous and ridiculous of failures.

Farther on in the same essay, after speaking at length of Bute's resignation, its probable causes and the attendant circumstances, Macaulay inserts the following link :

Whatever may have been his motives, he retired. Fox at the same time took refuge in the House of Lords [that is, was made peer with the

title of Lord Holland] ; and Grenville became first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer [that is, became Prime Minister].

As a specimen of linking in simple narrative we may note the last paragraph in the second chapter of *Silas Marner* :

But about the Christmas of that fifteenth year a second great change came over Marner's life, and his history became blent in a singular manner with the life of his neighbors.

Chapter third introduces the neighbors.

Caution.—The reader should be on his guard against mistaking every short brisk paragraph, especially in narrative, for a link. The office of the genuine link-paragraph is to sum up, to pause and to look forward, or to linger suggestively. Its inevitable effect is that of a halt, however slight. Whereas an ordinary short paragraph rather accelerates the general movement.

Examples of both sorts are found in close proximity in Irving's *Buckthorne*. For example :

In this way, then, did I enter the metropolis, a strolling vagabond, on the top of a caravan, with a crew of vagabonds about me ; but I was as happy as a prince ; for, like Prince Hal, I felt myself superior to my situation, and knew that I could at any time cast it off, and emerge into my proper sphere.

This not only sums up the past but suggests the future. A reader familiar with Irving's covert irony will immediately suspect that this future may not be quite as the young runaway fancies. A later paragraph tells us how Buckthorne "emerged into his proper sphere" :

In the midst of my doleful dumps, some one tapped me on the shoulder, and, looking up, I saw a couple of rough sturdy fellows standing behind me. Not knowing what to expect, I jumped on my legs, and was preparing again to make battle, but was tripped up and secured in a twinkling.

This is not a link but merely a brisk narrative paragraph. The reader is hurried along, as Buckthorne was hurried. The two fellows have captured him for the reward offered by the father. Soon, however, we do get a genuine link :

Thus ended my first peep into the world. I returned home, rich in good-for-nothing experience, and dreading the reward I was to receive for my improvement. My reception, however, was quite different from what I had expected. My father had a spice of the devil in him, and did not seem to like me the worse for my freak, which he termed "sowing my wild oats." He happened to have some of his sporting friends to dine the very day of my return; they made me tell some of my adventures, and laughed heartily at them.

Buckthorne's adventures as a strolling player are thus summed up; the conclusion of the paragraph suggests a new, yet different, phase of vagabondage.

Further Caution.—The paragraph is a *body* of thought, not a single detached thought. Even the link-paragraph, however short, is a summing up and a leading on. It marks a distinct turn. Apart from the link-paragraph, every paragraph ought to present an adequate treatment of some considerable portion of the subject. Yet of late the fashion has prevailed altogether too much of writing a succession of very short paragraphs, each containing only a single sentence, or at the most two very short sentences. An example, the Hotel Rafael incident, was quoted in § 52. To that may be added the following :

Some of the leading citizens of McCook, Arizona, having made all the money they could possibly use in the remaining years of their life, decided to reform.

In fact, we got to be such a good town that the women began to move in.

No sooner had they moved in than fancy linen made its appearance.

The very next step in the triumphant march of civilization was Lee Toy.

Lee Toy came originally from China. For a living he washed shirts and other things.

This manner of writing is supposed to be the mark of superior "brains"; it is called "snappy." And, indeed, it makes upon the mind an impression like that made by the snapping of a pack of firecrackers. It is mere noise. The judicious reader knows that such is not the manner of the

great writers, who have the art of combining vivacity with dignity. The judicious reader knows also that this "fad," like others of the sort, will have its day and pass away and be forgotten. Lest, however, the young be tempted to yield to the passing fad and be "snappy," let them consider the following axiom. To make certain things prominent is good, is even necessary, in all writing. Only, you must *select* what is truly prominent. *For, when you make everything prominent, you leave nothing prominent.*

CHAPTER V.

COMPOSITION-WRITING.

55. General Explanation.—The term composition may be applied to any piece of writing, whether long or short, whether complicated or simple. Thus, any one of the independent paragraphs quoted in §§ 41, 42, is no less a composition than Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, a work in several volumes, each volume divided into books, chapters, sections, and paragraphs.

In the present chapter, however, the term Composition is employed in the usual school and college sense, to denote a piece of writing which may vary in length from 500 words to 1500 or 2000 words, and which is to embody the knowledge, views, and feelings of a young writer upon a subject within the range of school and college life or study.

Whether the writing be called a composition or an essay does not matter. Neither does it matter, for the present chapter, whether the subject be chosen by the writer himself or assigned to him by the teacher.

It is the office of life and of education in general to tell the writer *what to say*. Thus the historian finds out what to say by studying the records of the past ; the botanist, by studying plants ; the economist, by studying the phenomena of trade and exchange.

The office of the teacher of composition, or of a manual like the present, is not to tell the writer what to say but merely to try to show him how to put his thoughts and observations *into readable shape*. Teacher and manual can do for the writer nothing more than lay down a few simple general principles. These principles may be briefly treated under three headings.

I. PREPARING THE SUBJECT.

56. Defining, or Restricting, the Subject.—The subjects usually assigned to the young, or chosen by them, are too wide and consequently too vague. Let us suppose, for example, the subject to be *Ambition*. What is a young writer to do with it? Either it suggests nothing at all, or it suggests everything at once, without aim or plan. Whereas, if it be properly restricted, that is, defined or narrowed, it becomes at once more manageable. Thus, it may be restricted to *Ambition in School Work*, or to *Ambition in Athletic Contests*. On the other hand, if the writer wishes to give to the subject an historical turn, he may limit it to *Ambition in Alexander the Great*, in *Hannibal*, in *Julius Cæsar*, in *Napoleon*.

As a second example, let us take *George Washington*. This may be restricted to *Washington in His Youth*, or to *Washington at Valley Forge*, or to *Washington as President*.

In like manner *Benjamin Franklin* may be restricted to *Franklin as a Boy and Young Man*, or to *Franklin in France*, or to *Franklin and the Kite*.

Let us suppose the subject to be *Describe the Town in which You Live*. This may be handled in many different ways. The writer may describe the town with regard to the excellence of its architecture and the beauty of the surrounding country; or he may describe the town with regard to its trade and manufactures; or with regard to its population and municipal government.

In general, the narrower, more definite the subject, the easier it is to handle. The first direction, therefore, is this:

Before touching pen to paper, look at the subject deliberately, turn it over in your mind, see how it may be divided, recognize the various aspects under which it may be treated, and then select those divisions or those aspects which seem to you the most promising.

57. Collecting Items.—This process has been aptly described as “surrounding the subject with questions.” Our

knowledge and views upon a subject are usually dormant; before we begin to write, we must wake them up. The process may be illustrated by some examples:

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE.

Is the bridge of wood, of iron, of stone? What kind of water does it cross? Is it a country bridge, or does it connect parts of a city or a town?

How does it compare in size with other bridges? How long has it been built? Anything peculiar in its appearance?

How does the view up stream differ from the view down? Do vessels pass under it, or through it (draw)?

Is there much traffic over the bridge? Does this traffic vary much from day to day, or at different hours of the day? What persons use the bridge most?

What near objects most conspicuous from the bridge? What distant objects? Any of these objects worthy of special description? Is the general outlook from the bridge attractive, or unattractive? Why?

Any interesting stories associated with the bridge?

[In like manner may be treated the view from a church-tower, spire, or other elevation.]

A DAY IN THE CITY.

[BY ONE LIVING IN THE COUNTRY.]

How did I get to town—by railroad, steamboat, wagon, or afoot? First object that arrested my attention in the city? Appearance of streets in general, wide or narrow, well or badly kept? Of the buildings in general?

General appearance of persons in the street—well or badly dressed? Any indications of poverty, of wrong-doing? Appearance and conduct of the police?

How did the boys and girls compare, in looks and conduct, with my home-acquaintances?

VISIT TO A FACTORY.

Location of building? Size, appearance outside, inside? What articles manufactured? Water-power used, or steam, or electricity?

Rooms clean and well ventilated? How many employees? Both men and women? Any children? If so, how old? General appearance of the employees?

What part of the machinery, what process, interested me most?

Have the employees a reading-room, or any other place or means of entertainment, provided by the employer?

THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY.

How much time given to it in our school? How much time given to map-drawing? Are we taught the geography of our neighborhood, county, State? How much are we expected to know of the United States? Of other countries?

What do we learn of the influence of rivers, lakes, mountains, winds, rain, upon the climate, upon vegetable and animal life, upon public health?

What are the peculiar features of our neighborhood?

Difference between political geography and physical? Value of both in studying history?

Contrast between map of United States in 1857 and map at present time?

Similar contrast in maps of Africa?

MY LAST VACATION.

Spent at home, or away? Wholly in amusement, or did I accomplish any study or other work? Let me recall one day as a sample.

To what extent has the vacation done me good? Did I need the rest or change? What would have been the effect had I spent every morning in reviewing a subject in which I am deficient?

How did my schoolmates spend their vacation? Any difference between myself and them?

SLANG.

What is meant by slang? What kinds of persons use it habitually? What kinds of persons are careful to avoid it? Do I hear much in my daily life?

Why should any one use slang? Does any good come of it? Any harm?

What is the opposite of slang? Wherein does slang differ from bad grammar? How are both treated in school? Why?

Does the habit of using slang have any effect upon politeness, neatness, self-respect, the respect due to others?

THE ADVANTAGES OF TRAVEL.

Does this mean travel in general, or my personal experience? How much have I travelled, and where? How much for pleasure, for business, for health?

How much knowledge of men and places have I gained from my travels? Which trip was especially pleasant or profitable? Why?

How does ordinary travel differ from exploration? What books of travel have I read? Which have interested me most?

How does travel now differ from travel ninety years ago? Some facts illustrating the hardships of travel in this country about 1810.

In these examples, the order in which the questions are set down is not to be regarded as an *outline* of the composition. Nor are the questions here grouped together to be regarded as forming a *paragraph*. The questions are set down merely in the order in which they might occur to any mind just beginning to look at the subject.

"Questioning" should be a regular class-exercise for beginners. For example, let the teacher spend the first half of the hour in discussing and restricting the subject with the scholars, and in questioning them and leading them on to questioning for themselves. Then let the scholars spend the remaining half of the hour in writing down rapidly their answers to such of the questions as seem to them to represent their views of the subject. At the next hour the teacher should return these embryonic sketches with corrections.

Such a process is necessarily slow; yet, within reasonable limits, the slower the better. In composition, as in other arts, the first movements are to be mastered patiently and deliberately. Besides, the questioning-method is the best means of enforcing the doctrine that *writing should begin with thinking*. If the beginner can only learn to think systematically under the teacher's guidance and stimulus, the battle is more than half won.

58. Grouping Items.—After the student has collected a sufficient number of items, his next step will be to sort them into groups with reference to the composition as a whole. This grouping is really the first step in composing, and is perhaps the most important of all; for it implies that the student is able to survey the subject and determine the size and value of each part in its relation to all the other parts.

Grouping means, in fact, thinking out the plan for the whole—arranging one's views and ideas in *an order which the reader can readily perceive and estimate*.

Such arrangement will depend, in good measure, upon the nature of the subject.

In Description and Narration the writer must determine which feature or incident is the most striking or the most important, and then determine what else can be effectively grouped round this as a centre. For example, in describing the trade and manufactures of a town it is advisable to ascertain the business-centre or the controlling business, and subordinate the rest to this. In describing the natural beauties of a scene, one should seize upon the prominent feature, whether river, or lake, or hill. In narrating, one should seize upon one incident as the cardinal incident, and treat the other incidents as prelude or as sequel.

In Exposition, which is the explanation of a phenomenon or the discussion of a law or general relation, the writer is always to consider the law of cause and effect and the possibility of illustrating by means of resemblances and differences. Put in simpler language, the process may be defined as saying what a thing *is*, what it is *not*; what it is *like*, what it is *unlike*; what has *produced* it, what in turn is *produced by it*. For example, let us suppose the subject to be *The Habit of Neatness*. What other habits resemble it most closely? What habits are in most evident contrast with it? How is the habit formed and maintained? What are the unpleasant consequences of want of neatness?

Further, every subject admits of more than one mode of treatment; the writer has his choice. For example, *Washington at Valley Forge* may be treated as a mere description of the hardships endured by the Americans; there may be also a contrast with the comfort of the British in their winter quarters. Again, the causes may be mentioned which forced Washington into this trying position. Going a step farther, the writer may introduce the change brought about by the

French alliance. From the moral side, the writer may contrast the sanguine hopes of the Americans in 1775 and 1776 with their subsequent reverses.

The following general direction will be of help. Jot down your several items on small slips of paper of uniform size. It will not be necessary to write out the item in full ; a catch-word—anything to recall the point—will be enough. Look over these item-slips carefully several times, until they are all clear and present to your mind. Then *arrange in small groups those slips which naturally go together*. Each group will be the foundation of a paragraph, and the items will constitute the body of the paragraph.

Every composition, however short and unpretending, should be a unit, and the several paragraphs should be in sequence. As a whole, the composition should give evidence of a purpose clearly understood by the writer. The composition should interest the reader by its attractive presentation of the appearance and actions of objects and persons, or convey information in an orderly shape, or teach some lesson of value. What is to be the “point” of any composition in particular *the writer must decide for himself*.

This is the proper stage for the decision, namely, just before the work of writing begins. For the decision involves the rejection of every item which does not fit into the composition as a whole or into any one paragraph. Such an item is irrelevant matter ; if introduced, it would interfere with unity. It is in a measure connected with the subject, but *not with the writer's treatment of the subject*.

This stage, namely, of grouping items, ought also to form a regular class-room exercise for beginners. The teacher ought to require each scholar to state verbally his general object in the composition, the purport of each paragraph, and the items which he intends using in the paragraph. In this way any defect of method can be promptly detected and corrected.

2. FORMULATING THE COMPOSITION.

59. Working Plan, or Outline.—Having thought out his general purpose and grouped his items provisionally, the writer is now to prepare a systematic plan, an outline, which is to be the structure of the entire composition. The outline will depend not only upon the nature of the subject but also upon the length of the composition. In general, the longer the composition, the more elaborate should be the outline. For example :

CAMPING IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

The writer has accumulated a large stock of items, namely : incidents of travel from his home to the Adirondacks ; his impressions of rivers, lakes, woods, mountains ; his impressions of guides and other strangers ; peculiarities of travel afoot or in canoe ; good and bad luck in fishing or hunting ; effects of the novel life and diet upon his health ; traits of character which this mode of life has brought out in himself and in his companions ; contrast between this mode of life and life at home ; discovery of more or less unfamiliar plants and animals ; comparison of Adirondack scenery with home scenery.

Let us assume that the writer is limited to 600 words. Evidently he cannot include all his items in this one composition. He is forced to restrict himself to one aspect of the subject. Among the various possibilities, he might :

- a.* Narrate the more striking incidents of his trip, from the time he entered the region until he left it.
- b.* Or, give in detail the incidents of a single day as a specimen of camping-out in general.
- c.* Or, describe the prominent features of lakes and rivers, woods and mountains.
- d.* Or, mention the peculiarities of fishing and hunting.
- e.* Or, discuss the gain to body and mind from such a trip, or the social features of such close companionship.

Let us assume, further, that the writer, after the manner laid down in §§ 56, 59, has decided to restrict himself to a description of the scenery and has grouped his items accordingly.

He should formulate this subject in a sentence. Thus :

In this composition I am going to describe the lakes and rivers, the woods and mountains, of the Adirondacks.

A sentence of this sort, written down, is to be the writer's guide, *his working formula*. He is not to insert it in his composition, he is not to use it for the title ; but he is to have the sentence, the formula, *constantly before his eye and his mind*.

If the composition is to be of more than usual length, say of 2500 or 3000 words, the writer might combine all the above-mentioned items. In that case his formula would be more elaborate. Thus :

I am going to narrate a three weeks' trip in the Adirondacks, telling where I went, describing some of the scenery, giving the incidents of one day as a sample of the life, and stating facts enough to justify the conclusion that the trip has done me good.

Here the description would be subordinate to the narrative, and the two together would lead up to the conclusion.

For all compositions it is advisable to formulate not only the general subject of the whole composition but also the special subject of each paragraph. This may be done by writing at the top of a sheet of paper the formula for the whole composition, and below, in arithmetical numbering, a succession of formulas, one for each paragraph.

Beginners should be required to make not only the general formula but also *each separate paragraph-formula a complete sentence*. Such a requirement will be a check upon rambling. Students more advanced may be permitted to reduce the paragraph-formula to a significant phrase.

In any event the whole outline, that is, the general formula with its arithmetical succession of paragraph-formulas, should be submitted as an exercise in writing, and as such should be corrected by the teacher. Also a copy of the outline should be preserved by the teacher and compared afterward with the finished composition, to determine whether the two agree.

By way of illustration we may formulate :

NEATNESS IN SCHOOL LIFE.

General Formula.—What neatness is, what it implies, what it does.

First Paragraph.—Examples of neatness in dress, penmanship, etc.
Examples of want of neatness.

[These examples, of course, are not to be made *personalities*.]

Second Paragraph.—Other good habits most closely resembling neatness. Bad habits usually associated with want of neatness.

Third Paragraph.—General principle or disposition of the mind underlying neatness. This principle wanting wherever neatness is wanting.

Fourth Paragraph.—Connection of this same principle with other good habits. Its absence leads to bad habits in general. The saying is applicable: There may be many ways of doing a thing badly, but there is only one way of doing it well.

Fifth Paragraph.—Effects of habit of neatness on the person himself, on his companions.

Such a handling of the subject of Neatness, if not strictly philosophic, may serve at least to make expository writing intelligible. The student will note the method of explaining a thing by means of its resemblances and its differences, its cause and its effects.

The following are specimens of actual work :

1. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND [Title¹].

*Theme.*²—The Industrial Revolution in England seems to have caused a complete change in the manner and method of production, and greatly affected the social and industrial condition of the nation.

1. Previous to 1760, the domestic system of manufacture was prevalent in England.

2. The social condition of the people was closely related to the state of the industrial world.

3. In 1770 came the great inventions which caused a sudden and violent change in the industrial system.

4. The social system was also completely revolutionized by the change.

5. The revolution seems to have brought about many results, both good and bad.

¹ For a discussion of Title see § 64.

² The word Theme is employed in this writing course as a convenient abridgment of General Formula.

2. GLOVE-MAKING.

Theme.—The manufacture of gloves is a systematized process.

1. The manufacture of gloves is an extensive and diversified occupation.¹
2. The conversion of the skin into leather is done by means of several processes.
3. Cutting is the first step in the manufacture of the gloves, and is done by two different methods.
4. The gloves then pass through several hands, as the silker, the end-puller, the maker, and the hemmer.
5. When the gloves are completed, with buttons and button-holes, they are laid off, packed, and shipped to the buyer.

3. THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION.

Theme.—The now common belief that all animals and plants have been developed from lower forms has been accepted by nearly all scientific men for several reasons.

1. Introduction. The theory of evolution at first met with much opposition.
2. Men have come to see that there are mutual affinities of organic beings.
3. Men have found that there are strong embryological relations between organic beings.
4. Geology has shown a geological succession of organic beings.
5. The geographical distribution of plants and animals has helped man to accept the doctrine of evolution.
6. General summary.

4. IMMORALITY OF COLLEGE LIFE.

*Exposition.*² Being an argument in favor of a consideration of the subject, when a true conception of the matter might be had, and true conclusions drawn, outsiders being too prone to judge colleges wicked and demoralizing from superficial knowledge of the facts.

¹ The distinction between the theme and this first paragraph is not as lucid as it should be. The writer intended this paragraph to be an introductory statement of the general magnitude of the business, the capital, number of hands, etc.

² This paper is offered as a "warning example." It is wholly without unity and sequence. The paper was rejected, and the writer directed to *think*.

1. Introduction.
2. Specific examples to prove my theory.
3. Business men too often look askance on college graduates, judging them unfit.
4. Harm done students by large allowances.
5. Conclusion.

The following outlines are in Narration and Description. In this course the student is required not only to make an outline, as heretofore, but also to mention the especial form of narrative or description he undertakes, and his purpose, whether to please or to instruct. Hence the use of such terms as Purpose, Method, Plot, Setting, Characters. In the story proper, Plot is equivalent to Theme.

Some of the papers, it will be observed, are more or less imaginative; others deal with actualities only.

1. NEW YORK LIFE AS SEEN IN CITY HALL PARK.

Theme.—The business life of New York is well displayed in and about City Hall Park.

Purpose.—To present an interesting scene.

1. Every one is in haste.
2. The typical business man may be discerned by his dress and bearing.
3. Different types of employees hurry past.
4. The newsboys and bootblacks add to the liveliness.

2. HIRAM JACOB, ANNIHILATOR OF THE UNDESIRABLE.

Purpose.—To write a story that will appeal to the imagination.

Plot.—A man, in attempting to annihilate others, annihilates himself.

1. Seeing Hiram Jacob's advertisement, I write for information.
2. I make a test of Hiram Jacob's wonderful power.
3. I attempt to solve the mystery by finding out Hiram Jacob's whereabouts.
4. I am to be destroyed by Hiram Jacob, but am saved by a strange happening.

3. A CARRIAGE RIDE IN THE BERKSHIRES.

Purpose.—To give my impression of the beauty and picturesqueness of the scenery.

Method.—Narrative ; changing point of view.¹

Theme.—The drive through the country showed us some picturesque and beautiful scenery.

1. Setting and characters were congenial.²
2. The drive to the Connecticut River was full of interesting sights ; particularly the drive through Deerfield.
3. The river crossing was novel and interesting and gave us a fine bit of scenery.
4. The drive home through the growing dusk was also filled with the pleasant beauty of Nature.

4. SUGAR MAKING.³

Purpose.—To entertain.

Theme.—To the boy it was a time of delight.

1. The boy is eager for the sap to run.
2. He loves to help gather [collect ?] the sap.
3. He does not mind getting his eyes filled with smoke while watching it [the sap ? § 20] boil.
4. He is supremely happy, if he can [may ?] stay with the men at night.
5. He is always at hand when it is time to syrup-down.
6. Perhaps most of all he enjoys sugaring-off.

5. [THE SOPHOMORES OUTWITTED.]⁴

Purpose.—Amusement.

Plot.—The Sophomore girls try to frustrate the Freshman girls' plans for a banquet, and fail.

Characters.—Freshman girl, brother, brother's friend, Sophomore girl.

1. Freshman girl, writing to her brother, tells him the date set for the Freshman banquet.
2. The brother tells his friend.
3. The friend casually mentions it in a letter to a Sophomore girl.
4. The Sophomores make great preparations to defeat the Freshmen.

¹ This language is technical ; it designates that form of description in which the writer describes by means of narrating.

² Probably the writer meant simply : My companions were congenial.

³ Maple Sugar Making ? There is more than one kind of sugar.

⁴ As originally submitted, the outline was without a title. The omission is instructive ; it demonstrates that the title is not at all involved in the work of composing, but is only an afterthought (see § 64). The wording of one or two clauses has been altered for the sake of conciseness.

5. The latter, learning of the plans,¹ hold the banquet on the night before that [originally] determined on.

The process of collecting and grouping items and formulating an outline is necessarily slow. Certainly the first attempt will demand much time and effort. With every fresh composition, however, the task will become lighter, until—after the fourth or fifth composition—the student perceives that he is acquiring a certain skill in formulating.

Slow or rapid, the process is the only sure means of curing the chronic fault of school and college composition, namely, the lack of unity, order, and proportion. The writer makes a false start, rambles, ends with a limp. He introduces irrelevant matter and omits what is needful, he is diffuse where he ought to be concise and *vice versa*, and what he says is shapeless and incoherent. The writer has written without a plan; the cure consists in requiring him to make a plan.

One feature in especial of good writing can be brought out with the aid of a good working plan; namely, Proportion. The writer, let us assume, is about to describe the lakes and rivers, the woods and mountains of the Adirondacks, in a composition of 600 words. Shall he treat all four parts of his subject alike, giving to each 150 words? Or may he, by grouping together the lakes and rivers, reduce the parts to three, giving to each 200 words? Or, again, may he introduce a third variation, by giving 150 words to the mountains and 250 to the woods? Such questions can be answered only by the writer himself; his answer will turn upon the range of his knowledge and the bent of his tastes. He is first to prepare his outline and then answer arithmetically the following general question:

Given so many hundred words for a whole composition in four, six, eight, nine paragraphs, how many words shall I apportion to each individual paragraph, according to my estimate of its relative importance?

¹ Is not this discovery important enough for a separate paragraph?

3. WRITING THE COMPOSITION.

60. First Draught.—Having prepared his outline, the student is now to fill out the first draught. The following directions will be of service :

1. Use ruled paper, the lines pretty wide apart. Also leave an ample margin, perhaps of two inches or two and a half. You will need plenty of space for corrections and insertions.

2. Before beginning a paragraph go over the items which are to make up its body. Keep these points in mind :

a. Compose the paragraph as rapidly as possible.

b. Do not linger over words and phrases.

c. Do not linger over your sentence-structure.

d. Be satisfied with putting your thoughts into tolerably coherent shape.

Consider that your present aim is to put the paragraph together as a whole, rather than to perfect each clause and sentence. After you have planned deliberately, you ought to write rapidly, with *impetus*.

61. Revision.—This is just the opposite of draughting ; it should be slow and deliberate. Hence the following directions :

1. Revise as slowly as possible. If you can spare the time, lay the composition aside for a day or two, to let it get cold, as it were.

2. Scrutinize every word and phrase ; turn over every clause and sentence.

3. Be satisfied with nothing short of the conviction that every word is the proper word and stands in the proper place.

Consider that revision is a *critical* act, calling for the utmost coolness and circumspection. The writer is to revise his work in a *judicial* spirit, approving and rejecting his own expressions as impartially as if they were the expressions of another person.

In revising a paragraph, learn to employ Echo and Repeated

Structure, also Connectives and the Topic Sentence. These devices, which may appear awkward and even mechanical at first, will become easier with each attempt. In particular, Echo and Repeated Structure will, through constant practice, become almost spontaneous. One soon learns that fitting sentences into one another leads inevitably to improving each individual sentence. Even the Topic Sentence will be mastered, if the writer tries persistently to make each paragraph turn upon some one sentence.

In revising sentences, make sure of Unity and absolute Clearness; scrutinize closely every *and*-construction. In the matter of Force, pay especial heed to the beginning and the end of the sentence. Above all, learn to condense, to weed out whatever is superfluous. The knack of weeding is not readily learned; it comes of patience and a resolute purpose. The following specimens, taken from college papers, will illustrate the need of condensation:

His appearance had that wholesome plainness *about it* which dispelled suspicion.

His appearance was of that wholesome plainness which dispels [§ 40] suspicion.

Refusing all money *consideration*, they would only accept the rings.

Refusing money, they would accept only the rings.

He was so *worked up and* excited that, etc.

He was so excited that, etc.

Her position was by no means of *an* enviable *character*.

Her position was by no means enviable.

If you look from the tower you will see the whole city.

From the tower you will see the whole city.

The reason why Socrates was condemned to death *was* because of his unpopularity.

Socrates was condemned to death because (in consequence) of his unpopularity.

When the first draught is thus thoroughly revised, it should, of course, be copied in the neatest and most legible shape. The paper ought to be ruled, the lines not too close together. There ought to be a margin of at least one and a half inches.

In this matter of ruling and margin every teacher should adopt uniform requirements.

62. Introduction and Conclusion.—It is impossible to lay down precise rules for the employment of paragraphs of introduction and conclusion. Are they always necessary? The ordinary text-book seems to teach that they are. For example :

Every theme, when complete, consists of three parts—the Introduction, the Discussion, and the Conclusion.¹

Another term for the Discussion is the Body of the Discourse.

There are grave objections to the doctrine as thus put. In truth, the whole theory of Introduction and Conclusion is applicable to the preparing of public discourses, orations, essays, books, and other matter for print, rather than to the writing of school and college compositions.

In a paper of 600 or 800 or even of 1000 words there is *no room* and *no call* for a formal beginning and ending. Observe the following directions :

Get to work as quickly as possible. Content yourself with your outline, first draught, and revision. If these are well done, your paper will be clear, coherent, and to the point. More than that no one has a right to demand of you.

If the paper is to contain 1500 words or upward, especially if it is upon a subject at all complex, involving something more than mere narration or description, the writer may consider this question :

Can I really make my treatment more effective by means of an introduction and a conclusion ?

That is to say, the writer should judge for himself, and not follow blindly a mere text-book rule.

¹ Williams, *Composition and Rhetoric*, edition of 1892, p. 271 ; see also D. J. Hill, *Elements of Rhetoric and Composition*, p. 16. On the other side, see Wendell, *English Composition*, p. 167, upon the impulse " to preface something in particular by at least a paragraph of nothing in particular, bearing to the real matter in hand a relation not more inherently intimate than that of the tuning of violins to a symphony."

In any case the Introduction should be nothing more than the Working or Subject Formula (see § 59), cast into a brief paragraph of forty or fifty words. Webster's argument in the Dartmouth College case offers a model :

The general question is, whether the acts of the legislature of New Hampshire of the 27th of June and of the 18th and 26th of December, 1816, are valid and binding on the plaintiffs *without their acceptance or assent*.

The following, slightly longer, is from Ruskin's lecture on *Turner and His Works* :

My object this evening is [not so much to give you any account of the works or the genius of the great painter whom we have so lately lost (which it would require rather a year than an hour to do) as] to give you some idea of the position which his works hold with respect to the landscape of other periods, and of the general condition and prospects of the landscape art of the present day. [I will not lose time in prefatory remarks, as I have little enough at any rate, but will enter abruptly on my subject.]

By suppressing the passages here inclosed in square brackets, Ruskin might have reduced the paragraph to forty words ; still, these extra words are not without significance.

The following is from one of Huxley's lectures :

The subject to which I have to beg your attention during the ensuing hour is "The Relation of Physiological Science to Other Branches of Knowledge."

[This is merely a Title ; it is followed by a paragraph of personal explanation. Then comes the real Introduction :]

Regarding Physiological Science, then, in its widest sense, as the equivalent of Biology, the Science of Individual Life, we have to consider in succession :

1. Its position and scope as a branch of knowledge.
2. Its value as a means of discipline.
3. Its worth as practical information.
4. At what period it may best be made a branch of education.

In Narration and Description it is well to begin by locating the scene or the centre of interest. The following examples are from Irving and Hawthorne :

On a stormy night, in the tempestuous times of the French revolution,

a young German was returning to his lodgings, at a late hour, across the old part of Paris. The lightning gleamed, and the loud claps of thunder rattled through the lofty narrow streets—but I should first tell you something about this young German.

Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon Street; the house is the old Pyncheon house; and an elm tree, of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town-born child by the title of the Pyncheon elm. On my occasional visits to the town aforesaid, I seldom failed to turn down Pyncheon Street, for the sake of passing through the shadow of these two antiquities—the great elm tree and the weather-beaten edifice.

The last sentence in the paragraph from Hawthorne is a specimen of that author's subtle method of interweaving the thread of human sympathy. Irving's abrupt ending is a not very common mode of leading on to the next paragraph (see § 49).

A paragraph of Conclusion should, if possible, leave upon the reader's mind an impression of power. The writer should not merely sum up his views: he should try to drive them home by a succession of quick bold utterances. Further, he should, if the subject admits of it, make the whole paragraph an expression of deep yet somewhat repressed feeling.

The conclusion of Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables* is noteworthy:

Maule's well, all this time, though left in solitude, was throwing up a succession of kaleidoscopic pictures, in which a gifted eye might have seen foreshadowed the coming fortunes of Hepzibah and Clifford, and the descendant of the legendary wizard, and the village-maiden over whom he had thrown love's web of sorcery. The Pyncheon elm, moreover, with what foliage the September gale had spared to it, whispered unintelligible prophecies. And wise uncle Venner, passing slowly from the ruinous porch, seemed to hear a strain of music, and fancied that sweet Alice Pyncheon—after witnessing these deeds, this by-gone woe, and this present happiness, of her kindred mortals—had given one farewell touch of a spirit's joy upon her harpsichord, as she floated heavenward from the *House of the Seven Gables*.

The conclusion of George Eliot's *Janet's Repentance*, simpler in thought, is equally effective :

But there is another memorial of Edgar Tryan, which bears a fuller record : it is Janet Dempster, rescued from self-despair, strengthened with divine hopes, and now looking back on years of purity and helpful labor. The man who has left such a memorial behind him must have been one whose heart beat with true compassion, and whose lips were moved by fervent faith.

The conclusion of Irving's *The Voyage*, describing his landing in England, is simpler still :

All now was hurry and bustle. The meetings of acquaintances—the greeting of friends—the consultations of men of business. I alone was solitary and idle. I had no friend to meet, no cheering to receive. I stepped upon the land of my forefathers—but felt that I was a stranger in the land.

For a specimen of Macaulay's manner, see the conclusion of the essay on Addison, quoted in § 52.

Introduction and Conclusion in Oratory.—Oratory in the true sense is a study by itself, demanding special training and perhaps also peculiar gifts. Certainly there is no room in the present text-book for the study of true oratory. By an oration is here meant a speech delivered by the ordinary student before a school or college audience, a speech upon school or college subjects.

Such a speech, however short and simple, needs both introduction and conclusion ; undoubtedly the audience will expect them both. How, then, should they be constructed ?

1. Prepare your speech as carefully as possible, according to the directions given in §§ 56–61. Pay especial attention to Repeated Structure, § 50.

2. Compose a brief introductory paragraph in which you arrest the listener's attention and give him a survey of the subject. Study the specimens quoted from Webster, Ruskin, and Huxley.

3. The concluding paragraph may be somewhat longer ; yet 100 words would certainly be a wise limit. In this para-

graph try to awaken the listener's sympathy with the subject itself and with your treatment of it. Sum up clearly. Be somewhat emotional, but do not cease to be calm and dignified. Let a vein of moral reflection run through the whole. Let this conclusion be less intense than the stronger passages in the speech proper.

Unfortunately, the so-called perorations of the great speakers—men like Burke and Webster—are impossible models for the young; these perorations are too grandiose. The *tone* of the conclusions quoted from George Eliot and Irving, however, is something that may be followed with safety.

63. Link-Paragraph.—How far this may be available in ordinary school and college writing is a problem. There is no room for one in a paper of 600 or 800 words. But in a longer paper, especially in a paper that seems to require an introduction and a conclusion, a link-paragraph may be a very desirable feature. It is always a useful means of disposing of one section of the subject and leading on to another section obviously in contrast. It is a very convenient device for summing up details in a provisional conclusion. In short, the link-paragraph marks what we call "transitions."

The longer the paper, the greater the need of link-paragraphs. A paper of 1500 words ought certainly to have one or two. The writer ought to find out the points at which a slight pause suggests itself, and insert at these points a brief survey of what he has said, and a hint of what he is going to say.

The absence of link-paragraphs is undoubtedly the chief cause of the monotony of school and college writing. Their presence would give to every paper a much higher degree of organization and much greater ease of movement. The young writer, accordingly, is urged to cultivate the art of "linking."

64. The Title.—The most prolific source of error among young writers is the confusion of Subject and Title. The Subject, as formulated according to the directions given in § 59, is the main thing; the Title is, in strictness, only an

after-thought,¹ a label or name, convenient for distinguishing one composition from another.

Frequently, perhaps usually, the title is not even a complete sentence, but only a phrase, a word or two, a proper name. This is exemplified in the titles of the papers discussed in § 59; also in the following, taken from a set of school papers: *Woman's Work*; *Municipal Government*; *The White City*; *Our Birds*; *Forestry*; *Our Debt to Holland*.

Nearly all these school papers betrayed the writer's inability to distinguish between title and subject. Instead of first formulating, *the writer had written upon a title*. Consequently the papers were lacking in purpose, coherence, and force. The papers upon *The White City*, as might have been expected, were the most incoherent. Everything connected in any way with the great Chicago exhibition was apparently regarded as available. Yet one writer, at least, had the beginning of a plan. Evidently he had said to himself, consciously or unconsciously: I will first *describe* those objects which impressed me most, and then I will tell what I *learned* from them about our country's present and prospective greatness. To that extent, then, his paper was methodical.

The following directions can be safely commended to all writers, young or old:

1. Complete your composition according to the directions given in §§ 59-63.
2. When it is completed, prefix—as Title—a brief heading *suggestive* of the real subject.

Thus, in the list given above, the composition entitled *Our Birds* might have been named, more suggestively, *Habits of the Undomesticated Birds of New York*; the one on *Forestry* might have been named *The Need of the Study of Forestry in America*.

In general, the student should not follow the lead of poets, novelists, and other imaginative writers in their choice or

¹ This is abundantly illustrated in the example quoted in § 59 [The Sophomores Outwitted].

invention of titles. *Sights and Insights* may do for Mrs. Whitney's volume of travels; *Aftermath*, for a volume of Longfellow's poems; *Sartor Resartus*, for Carlyle's memorable essay; *Præterita*, for Ruskin's autobiography. But for the young, such titles are too fanciful. The prime duty of youth is to learn to be direct and explicit. Fancy, if genuine, will find expression soon enough in after-life.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FORMS OF PROSE WRITING.

65. General Explanation.—The forms of *writing* should not be confounded with the forms of *literature*. These latter are endless, including poetry and the drama, fiction (the novel), history and biography, books of travel, etc. Any one literary form, for example a novel, may exhibit all the forms of writing in turn. By forms of writing are meant those modes of expression which we call Narration, Description, Exposition.

Argumentation, in which is included Persuasion, is not a mode of expression, but rather a distinct study. It is connected on the one hand with Logic, on the other with Psychology. When we attempt to convince other persons of the correctness of our opinions, we make use of processes more or less logical; when we attempt to induce other persons to side with us, to adopt and carry out certain measures, we make use of the processes of psychology. Among the Greeks and Romans the art of persuasion was called Rhetoric, that is, the art of the rhetor, or public speaker. The modern use of the term rhetoric to designate instruction, or a text-book of instruction, in ordinary every-day expression, is misleading and therefore harmful. The public speaker or debater, the lawyer (as advocate), the member of a legislative body, must study and practise an art peculiar to itself.¹

¹ Highly instructive specimens of narration and description, strictly subordinate to the main object, persuasion, are to be found in Webster's *Defence of the Kennistons* and *The Murder of Captain Joseph White*. In the former, the incidents connected with the alleged robbery are narrated with great skill; in the latter, the description of the murder-scene is dramatic in its vividness.

The term Criticism is used with a wide range of meaning. Sometimes it means the restatement of the chief points in the book criticized. Sometimes it means an analysis of the impressions made by the book upon the mind of the critic ; this is practically a description of the critic's mind. Finally, it may mean the attempt to set a valuation upon the book in relation to other books or to current opinion upon the subject ; this is a form of literature, and involves special study.

In the present chapter the student's attention is directed to Narration, Description, Exposition, so far as these can be taught in connection with the principles of sentence-structure, paragraphing, and composition-writing, elucidated in chapters i.-v. Only the most general features are discussed, such as may be of practical value in the work of school and college. Everybody ought to be taught how to narrate, describe, or discuss simple matters with some regard to form. Whatever may lie beyond this belongs to professional authorship.

NARRATION.

66. Definition ; Varieties.—A narrative is in general the statement of the details of something accomplished. This may be something actual or it may be something imagined. Thus, the story of Philip of Pokanoket, in Irving's *Sketch Book*, is actual history ; that of Rip Van Winkle is wholly imaginary.

In any case, the narrative must be based upon something more than a passing movement ; there must be a clearly marked beginning and a clearly marked end. Further, the act narrated must be concrete and individual, not general. By this is meant that it takes place only once or at rare intervals, and is not repeated constantly and uniformly. Thus, we do not narrate the daily rising and setting of the sun ; these we discuss in the way of Exposition. The beheading of Louis XVI. (fact) or that of Sydney Carton (fiction, in Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*) is narrated ; but we do not narrate the

process of death in general. That we treat in the way of Exposition, medical, philosophic, or religious. See § 79.

In the matter of length there is every conceivable variation, from the novel in several volumes to the following very concise fable :

A mouse saw his shadow on the wall. Said he, "I am larger than an elephant; I will go forth and conquer the world." At that moment he espied a cat. In the next he had slipped through a hole in the wall.—
BENSON: *Century Magazine*, January, 1894.

The specimens of narration quoted in the present treatise, for example, from Scott's *Kenilworth*, § 44, from Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, § 45, from Macaulay's *History*, § 45, from Irving, § 48, are not complete in themselves, but are merely passages selected from longer narratives. In all modern literatures, however, there are innumerable short stories, only a paragraph or two in length, either written as independent narratives or inserted in a longer narrative in such a way as to be easily detached. Such stories are usually called anecdotes. The following anecdote, told of one of Ruskin's college friends, will serve as a specimen :

When Acland . . . was wrecked in the steamer *Tyne*, off the coast of Dorset, . . . the officers in anxious debate, the crew in confusion, the passengers in hysterics or at prayers, were all astonished, and many scandalized, at the appearance of Dr. Acland from the saloon in punctilious morning dress, with the announcement that "breakfast was ready." To the impatient clamour of indignation with which his unsympathetic conduct was greeted, he replied by pointing out that not a boat could go on shore, far less come out from it, in that state of the tide, and that in the mean time, as most of them were wet, all cold, and at the best must be dragged ashore through the surf, if not swim for their lives in it, they would be extremely prudent to begin the day, as usual, with breakfast. The hysterics ceased, the confusion calmed, what wits anybody had become available to them¹ again, and not a life was ultimately lost.—RUSKIN: *Præterita*, i., 379 (ch. xi.).

67. General Principles.—These are three: Unity, Interest, and Sequence.

¹ This use of *them* in reference to *anybody* is not elegant.

Unity.—This is obtained by observing the methods of Grouping and Climax of Interest. In a narrative of fiction the subordinate persons are grouped around one or more leading persons (called hero and heroine), and the action reaches a point of highest interest (climax), after which it diminishes. In a narrative of fact no such completely artistic method can be resorted to. Yet the narrator, if he is skilful, will select and combine, will abridge or even omit what is of slight interest, and expand fully what is important, thereby introducing artistic method to a limited extent. In narrating natural events one is still more tied down to facts. Yet even here the narrator may select and group with an eye to effect, for example :

We had just emerged out of this baneful stretch of marshy ground . . . when the forest became suddenly darkened, so dark that I could scarcely read the compass, and a distant murmur increasing into loud soughing and wrestling and tossing of branches and groaning of mighty trees warned us of the approach of a tempest. As the ground round about was most uninviting, we had to press on through the increasing gloom, and then, as the rain began to drip, we commenced to form camp. The tents were hastily pitched over the short scrubby brush, while bill-hooks crashed and axes rang, clearing a space for the camp. The rain was cold and heavily dripped, and every drop, large as a dollar on their cotton clothes, sent a shiver through the men. The thunder roared above, the lightning flashed a vivid light of fire through the darkness, and still the weary caravan filed in until nine o'clock. The rain was so heavy that fires could not be lit, and until three in the morning we sat huddled and crouching amid the cold, damp, and reeking exhalations and minute spray. Then bonfires were kindled, and around these scores of flaming pyramids the people sat, to be warmed into hilarious animation, to roast the bitter manioc, and to still the gnawing pain of their stomachs.—STANLEY: *Darkest Africa*, i., 144.

In the foregoing the thread of artistic unity is found in the varying sensations of discomfort in the travelers.

Short narratives, such as the young are called upon to write, are not troublesome in the matter of unity; but long narratives are extremely difficult, and the discussion of unity in them belongs properly to the study of literature and literary methods.

Interest.—What is meant by saying that a narrative should be interesting? Certainly “interesting” is not the same as “exciting,” although young readers are apt to confound the two. A story is interesting when it has “point,” when it tells us something worth reading, when it adds to our stock of useful knowledge, or opens our eyes to the problems of life and awakens our sympathy in the welfare of others.

At all events the beginner is not to suppose that the mere recital of things *done* is a narrative. Between doing and accomplishing there is a difference, neatly hit off in Johnson’s parody of the empty street ballad :

I put my hat upon my head,
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
With his hat in his hand.

G. B. HILL’s ed. of *Boswell’s Johnson*, ii., 136, note 4.

The reader has only to compare this parody with the briefest genuine story, for example, the fable of the mouse, § 66.

Although it is quite impossible to put into words of exact definition the difference between a genuine narrative, however brief, and a mere statement of fact, yet the difference is felt by the youngest child. One need but study the short stories written by any author of ability, for instance, Hawthorne, and note how he introduces his teachings.

Even an ordinary incident of every-day life, for example, an obstacle overcome, a personal weakness resisted, a quarrel averted, a pleasure profitably enjoyed, may be the basis of a narrative, provided the incident have a recognizable beginning and ending and some “point.” Thus the papers cited in outline in § 59, pp. 151, 152 (*Hiram Jacob, Sophomores Outwitted*), illustrate what can be accomplished with very slight material.

*Sequence.*¹—In what order should the items or incidents be narrated? No absolute and universal rule can be given.

¹ For such special varieties as Reverting and Overlapping Narration, Episode and Digression, Intercalated Narrative, Retarded and Accelerated Movement, the reader is referred to the author’s *Handbook of English Composition*, §§ 26–31. These matters belong rather to the study of literature.

Sequence in a narrative running through many paragraphs is like sequence within the paragraph; that order is best which makes upon the reader's mind the clearest and deepest impression. Still, in a short narrative, especially in a narrative of the kind usually attempted in school and in college, the safest order is the chronological; the *incidents should be narrated in the order in which they occurred*. Frequently, however, even in the simplest narration, the order of events may properly be interrupted by the expression of feelings which the events naturally call forth, or by remarks which explain the conduct of the actors in the story.

A good instance of such interruption is to be found in Hawthorne's *David Swan*. The material of the story is of the slightest; its teaching is that innumerable events, "if such they may be called," come close upon us in our lives, "yet pass away without actual results, or even betraying their near approach." In brief, the story deals with *might-have-been's*. David Swan, a youth of twenty, is on his way afoot from his home in New Hampshire to Boston, to be taken "behind the counter" of his uncle, "a small dealer in the grocery line." The June day being warm, David, about noon, lies down in a little grove close by the road-side, to rest and wait for the stage. Soon he falls asleep. In his sleep he attracts the attention of several passers-by. First, an elderly and wealthy Boston merchant and his wife, whose carriage happens to break down at the spot. They are much interested in David's appearance; the thought even occurs to them of adopting him. Then follows this paragraph:

While these whispers were passing, the sleeper's heart did not throb, nor his features betray the least token of interest. Yet Fortune was bending over him, just ready to let fall a burden of gold.¹ The old merchant had lost his only son, and had no heir to his wealth except a distant relative, with whose conduct he was dissatisfied. In such cases, people sometimes do stranger things than to act the magician, and awaken a young man to splendor who fell asleep in poverty.

¹ The remark is characteristic of Hawthorne.

The next passer-by is a young girl. She too is attracted to David, though in a different spirit. Unfortunately David does not awake.

"How sound he sleeps!" murmured the girl.

She departed, but did not trip along the road so lightly as when she came.

Now, this girl's father was a thriving country merchant in the neighborhood, and happened, at that identical time, to be looking out for just such a young man as David Swan. Had David formed a wayside acquaintance with the daughter, he would have become the father's clerk, and all else in natural succession. So here, again, had good fortune—the best of fortunes¹—stolen so near that her garments brushed against him; and he knew nothing of the matter.

In his essay on Warren Hastings, Macaulay, after narrating at length the bitter attacks made upon Hastings and the desperate efforts to remove him from office, says that all these designs were suddenly discontinued, and at the expiration of his term he was quietly reappointed. The following paragraph explains:

The crisis was indeed formidable. That great and victorious empire, on the throne of which George the Third had taken his seat eighteen years before, . . . had been brought to the verge of ruin. In America, millions of Englishmen were at war with the country from which their blood, their language, their religion, and their institutions had been derived. . . . The great powers of Europe . . . now rejoiced in the prospect of a signal revenge. The time was approaching when our island . . . was to be assailed by France, Spain, and Holland, . . . when the British flag was to be scarcely able to protect the British channel. Great as were the faults of Hastings, it was happy for our country that at that conjuncture, the most terrible through which she has ever passed, he was the ruler of her Indian dominions.

The following paragraph, from Hawthorne's *The Great Stone Face*, is a singularly graceful blending of narrative summary with explanatory comment:

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him. It was always in his mind, whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He

¹ Contrast this with the previous remark on Fortune.

spent his childhood in the log-cottage where he was born, and was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many things, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart. In this manner, from a happy yet often pensive child, he grew up to be a mild, quiet, unobtrusive boy, and sun-browned with labor in the fields, but with more intelligence brightening his aspect than is seen in many lads who have been taught at famous schools. Yet Ernest had had no teacher, save only that the Great Stone Face became one to him. When the toil of the day was over, he would gaze at it for hours, until he began to imagine that those vast features recognized him, and gave him a smile of kindness and encouragement, responsive to his own look of veneration. We must not take upon us to affirm that this was a mistake, although the Face may have looked no more kindly at Ernest than at all the world besides. But the secret was, that the boy's tender and confiding simplicity discerned what other people could not see; and thus the love, which was meant for all, became his peculiar portion.

68. The Story.—The story is a special form of narration; though every story is narrative, not every narrative is a story. For example, Irving has recounted his experiences while visiting Scott at Abbotsford in 1817; the narrative, however, is not a story in the sense in which *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is a story.

The difference is hard to put in words; it must be felt rather than defined. We all read and enjoy stories; to be a story-teller is a special gift. In genuine story-telling the events of actual life are changed, other events are wholly imagined, characters from actual life are re-cast, other characters are created, the whole movement goes on outside of the actual; in short, the story is a version of something which never happened, but which might have happened as the writer *imagined* it.

Nevertheless, although story-telling is an unteachable art, the ordinary narrator may profit greatly from a study of its method.

In every story there are four elements: Character, Plot, Situation (Setting), and Purpose.¹

¹ Brewster, *Specimens of Narration*, p. xiii.

1. *Character*.—By this is meant that there are several persons, at least two, usually more, called the characters; sometimes the characters are animals or inanimate objects personified; see the fable of the mouse, § 66. These characters act and react one upon the other. Their views, desires, dispositions, differ sometimes, sometimes agree.

2. *Plot*.—This is the action, or story proper. Out of the agreement of the characters there comes progress; out of their disagreement there comes conflict, until at last one side gets the upper hand, and some final result is reached.

3. *Situation, or Setting*.—This is nothing more than the scene, the place in which the characters meet to agree or disagree.

4. *Purpose*.—This is the author's aim. He may seek merely to entertain us; or he may seek to awaken our sympathy for what is good and noble, our indignation at what is base. Possibly he may use the story as a means of calling our attention to something that is wrong in life, in society, in politics. Here the purpose becomes a *tendency*, and such a story is called a "tendency-romance."

Every narrator, however young and untried, should begin by studying these four elements in the works of the masters of story-telling. Even the simplest story by Irving, Hawthorne, Kipling, illustrates character, plot, scene, and purpose, reveals action growing out of character, uses scene as a background for heightening character.

Every one should try to make his narrative resemble a story, give to it some of the features of character, plot, setting, and purpose. With practice, the events of travel and of history may be made to read, as we say, "like a story." For travel thus narrated, see the passage from Stanley, § 67; for history, examine Macaulay's well-known account of the Black Hole in his essay on Lord Clive:

Nothing in history or fiction . . . approaches the horrors which were recounted by the few survivors of that night. They cried for mercy. They strove to burst the door. Holwell, who, even in that extremity, retained

some presence of mind, offered large bribes to the gaolers. But the answer was that nothing could be done without the Nabob's orders, that the Nabob was asleep, and that he would be angry if anybody woke him. Then the prisoners went mad with despair. They trampled each other down, fought for the places at the windows, fought for the pittance of water with which the cruel mercy of the murderers mocked their agonies, raved, prayed, blasphemed, implored the guards to fire among them. The gaolers in the mean time held lights to the bars, and shouted with laughter at the frantic struggles of their victims. At length the tumult died away in low gaspings and moanings. The day broke. The Nabob had slept off his debauch, and permitted the door to be opened. But it was some time before the soldiers could make a lane for the survivors, by piling up on each side the heaps of corpses on which the burning climate had already begun to do its loathsome work. When at length a passage was made, twenty-three ghastly figures, such as their own mothers would not have known, staggered one by one out of the charnel house. A pit was instantly dug. The dead bodies, a hundred and twenty-three in number, were flung into it promiscuously, and covered up.

69. Suggestions.—A few practical hints may be helpful :

1. Narration exhibits to us persons and objects in action, that is, in movement. Now all movement, to be visible, must be fairly rapid ; certainly rapid rather than slow. Hence the expression of the narrator should be correspondingly rapid ; a narrative that drags is as tedious as the pace of a snail. The narrator's diction should be clear and simple ; especially should the verbs be carefully chosen, for the verb is the word of action, the word that tells what is done. Adjectives should be used sparingly, for the adjective, being usually a word of *description*, is apt to compel the reader to stop and consider. Those adjectives are best which suggest rather than describe. Note, for example, the fewness of adjectives in the passage from Hawthorne, § 67. In one sentence only are the adjectives descriptive and noticeable, namely :

From a happy yet often pensive child, he grew up to be a mild, quiet, unobtrusive boy.

Here Hawthorne wishes his reader to dwell upon the change in Ernest. The sentences in narration should also be simple,

and short rather than long, loose rather than periodic ; certainly it is not wise to make them involved.

2. On the other hand, movement is not always rapid ; at times there is a slackening, almost a pause. So narration should have its occasional long sentence, its pause. Usually such long sentences are descriptive, as in the example just quoted from Hawthorne ; the explanation is that when we pause we look at things not as they move but as they are. The proper place for a pause-sentence is, of course, a transition of the narrative, a place where the narrator is about to turn from one aspect of his subject to another aspect perceptibly different. If the transition is very marked and significant, it may be treated in a link-paragraph. See § 54.

Occasionally a sentence of considerable length is good for summing up. Thus :

... As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him. The school was removed to a different quarter of the Hollow, and another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive ; that he had left the neighborhood, partly through fear of the goblins and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress ; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country ; had kept school and studied law at the same time, had been admitted to the bar, turned politician, electioneered, written for the newspapers, and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court. —IRVING : *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

Observe the rapidity, ease, and stability of structure, § 30, obtained by the repetition of the conjunction "that."

3. Learn to begin promptly. Do not, for instance, begin the narration of the events of a certain day by recounting all the events of the preceding day as a preamble ; of what went before give just enough to make the real action intelligible. On the other hand, do not end the narrative too abruptly. It is well to end with some remark leading back to the beginning and commenting upon the story as a whole. It is also well,

if the writer has the skill, to end with a remark or a slight action suggestive of an untold future. For example, Irving ends his *Rip Van Winkle* :

Even to this day they never hear a thunder storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all hen-pecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

Hawthorne ends *The Great Stone Face* :

But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet's arm and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some wiser and better man than himself would by and by appear, bearing a resemblance to the Great Stone Face.

4. Learn to write from a definite impression of the event as a whole and with a definite purpose. You are narrating, let us say, an incident in your own experience : what impression has that incident made upon you? An impression of pleasure or of dissatisfaction, of success or of failure, of mirth or of seriousness? Are you trying to amuse the reader or to give him information, or to interest him in yourself or in some other person? Viewing thus the event as a whole, with an individuality of its own, and keeping one definite purpose in mind, you will learn, as you can learn in no other way, how to begin promptly and move quickly, will learn what to say and what to leave unsaid.

DESCRIPTION.

70. Definition; Illustrations.—Description may be defined—with approximate accuracy—to be the attempt to create in the reader's mind an impression of objects like the impression which the writer has formed for himself through perception and reflection. By perception is meant, of course, the action of the senses; chiefly sight, hearing, smell. To these should be added the sensations of heat and cold, comfort or discomfort, and other sensations less easily classified and labelled. By reflection is meant the conscious action of the writer's mind

in arranging his perceptions and sensations into an orderly whole. This whole he is to present to the reader so clearly and so forcibly that the reader will receive a distinct impression of the whole and also of the parts.

In description, then, there are two processes : first, getting the material, namely, perceptions and sensations ; second, arranging that material. For the first process there is need of an open mind, a mind quick to perceive and interest itself in objects. For the second process there is need of a mind able to seize upon the characteristic features of an object, to focus the attention upon these, to *image* the object. Just in proportion as the writer succeeds in imaging the object 'in his own mind, just so far will he be on the way to success in impressing the mind of the reader.

The following passages illustrate not only various perceptions and sensations, but also the ability of the several writers to image their impressions. The first exhibits the sense of sight :

For all other rivers there is a surface and an underneath, and a vaguely displeasing idea of the bottom. But the Rhone flows like one lambent jewel ; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent rush and translucent strength of it blue to the shore and radiant to the depth.

Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing but flying water ; not water, neither¹—melted glacier, rather, one should call it ; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of Time.—RUSKIN : *Præterita*.

This illustrates the sense of hearing :

The one common note of all this country is the haunting presence of the ocean. A great faint sound of breakers follows you high up into the inland cañons ; the roar of water dwells in the clean, empty rooms of Monterey as in a shell upon the chimney ; go where you will you have but to pause and listen to hear the voice of the Pacific. You pass out of the town to the southwest, and mount the hill among pine woods. Glade, thicket, and grove surround you. You follow winding sandy tracks

¹ Ruskin is not the only writer who has slipped into this inelegant expression.

that lead nowhither. You see a deer; a multitude of quail arises. But the sound of the sea still follows you, as you advance, like that of wind among the trees, only harsher and stranger to the ear; and when at length you gain the summit, out breaks on every hand and with freshened vigour that same unending, distant, whispering rumble of the ocean, etc.—R. L. STEVENSON: *Across the Plains*.

In illustration of the sense of smell:

Indeed, it required a nose both subtle and unprejudiced to understand and thoroughly enjoy that Paris, . . . the “good old Paris” of Balzac and Eugène Sue and *Les Mystères*. . . .

One knew at a sniff as one passed the *porte cochère* what kind of people lived behind and above; what they ate and what they drank, and what their trade was; whether they did their washing at home, and burned tallow or wax, and mixed chicory with their coffee, and were over-fond of Gruyère cheese—the biggest, cheapest, plainest, and most formidable cheese in the world; whether they fried with oil or butter, and liked their omelets overdone and garlic in their salad, and sipped black-currant brandy or anisette as a liqueur; and were overrun with mice, and used cats or mouse-traps to get rid of them, or neither; and bought violets, or pinks, or gillyflowers in season, and kept them too long; and fasted on Friday with red or white beans, or lentils, or had a dispensation from the Pope—or, haply, even dispensed with the Pope’s dispensation.

For of such a telltale kind were the overtones in that complex odorous clang, etc.—DU MAURIER: *Peter Ibbetson*.

For the sensation of heat, see the passage (from Hamlin Garland) on the cornfield, § 44. For the sensation of home-like quiet and repose, note this from Hawthorne:

Phoebe found an unexpected charm in this little nook of grass and foliage and aristocratic flowers and plebeian vegetables. The eye of Heaven seemed to look down into it pleasantly, and with a peculiar smile, as if glad to perceive that nature, elsewhere overwhelmed and driven out of the dusty town, had here been able to retain a breathing-place. The spot acquired a somewhat wilder grace, and yet a very gentle one, from the fact that a pair of robins had built their nest in the pear tree and were making themselves exceedingly busy and happy in the dark intricacy of its boughs. Bees, too, . . . had thought it worth their while to come hither. . . . Yet, late as it now was, there still arose a pleasant hum out of one or two of the squash-blossoms, in the depths of which these bees were plying their golden labor.—*Seven Gables*, ch. vi.

71. Difficulties.—Describing, as every writer, experienced or inexperienced, knows only too well, is always difficult. The difficulties may be considered under three heads.

1. As the German critic Lessing pointed out nearly a century and a half ago, objects and parts of an object exist *simultaneously* in space; when we look at them, our eye perceives them instantaneously, or almost instantaneously. This is expressed in the phrase “taking in an object or a scene at a glance.” Whereas words and phrases *follow one another in time*. Accordingly, when we undertake to describe an object by means of words and phrases we use a slow, measurable process as a substitute for one that is practically instantaneous. The result is that the reader, when he gets to the end of our description, has had time to forget the beginning. If he really desires to profit by the description, he must recollect each step, and from these recollections construct for himself a mental image of the whole. This, of course, is difficult. The student need but apply the test to any long description of a complicated object or scene. He will perceive that in order to get his mental image he must make a severe and prolonged conscious mental effort. Hence the demand for pictures, drawings, maps, etc., in books of travel, of science, and the like, in which the description of visible objects forms an essential part.

To illustrate this difficulty further, we may compare description with narration. In narration the words and phrases follow one another in time; *so do the actions narrated*. Hence the movement of the narrative *corresponds* to the movement of the event narrated. Thus the reader follows with ease the progress of the writer.

2. Language is very inadequate to the needs of description. Nouns and adjectives, certainly, are seldom precise enough for reproducing the peculiarities of an individual object. When, in describing a certain person's face, we call it “round,” or “oval,” or “square,” do those terms really convey to the reader's mind an image of the face? When we call the eyes

"green," or "blue," or "black," do we really give their peculiar expression? In depicting a person or a scene, the most gifted writer is inferior to the artist. To test the assertion, one may compare any verbal description with any good portrait or drawing or even photograph.

3. Ability to describe presupposes an intimate knowledge of the object to be described. To acquire such knowledge, one's faculties of perception must be well trained. Yet very few of us are trained to detect peculiarities of form and color and sound. We pass by an object carelessly, notice but a fraction of what is in it, and in a moment forget it. The object has made no *impression* on our faculties, consequently none on our memory. Let the student try to recall a group of seven or eight persons, some standing, some sitting, the exact attitude of each individual, the bearing of each toward the others. Let him recall the dress and expression of each. Let him try to recall the objects in a shop-window, their size, color, position. A few experiments of this kind will soon satisfy any one that it is quite possible to slip through life without truly noticing things.

In the following sections various means and devices will be discussed for obviating the difficulties mentioned under the first two heads. For the difficulty last mentioned, the inability to perceive things as they are, there is no general remedy. One must cultivate the habit of studying objects and scenes and remembering them for *the purpose of describing them*. Further, one should remember that all knowledge is at once generic and specific. To know a particular object, one must know the class to which it belongs, must also know the peculiarities which differentiate this object from others in the same class. To describe one particular city, one must know something of cities in general. To describe a particular landscape, one must be familiar with the general aspects of the country. This relation of generic knowledge to specific is illustrated by a common experience of travel. The traveler who for the first time visits a country differing greatly from his own finds

the natives looking much alike; he has difficulty in distinguishing one from another. Only after he has grown familiar with the *type* of dress and complexion does he readily detect individual peculiarities.

At all events the student should understand that description rests upon knowledge and that such knowledge rests upon clear perception.

72. Impression; Purpose.—All good description, when closely studied, reveals two facts: first, that the describer has had a definite impression of the object; second, that he has written with a definite purpose. For example, in the passage quoted in § 70, Ruskin has conveyed a very definite impression of the river Rhone with the evident purpose of appealing to our sense of beauty; in the passage upon "the voice of the Pacific," Stevenson has conveyed an impression of all-pervading power with the purpose of demonstrating that Nature can be at times somewhat annoying; Du Maurier, again, in his impression of the odors of old Paris, has led us to sympathize humorously with the prying curiosity of a small active boy on a half-holiday in the streets of the great city. The significance of impression and purpose is equally evident in George Eliot's descriptions of Lantern Yard and Raveloe, the one a scene of intense but narrow spiritual earnestness, the other a scene of good-natured spiritual indifference. After we have contrasted these two sets, the toiling and overwrought Dissenters of Lantern Yard and the easy-going farmers and villagers of Raveloe, we understand the complete isolation of Silas's life.

Impression and purpose, then, should be uppermost in the writer's mind in describing. The best advice that one can give to the young writer is this:

Before you begin to describe, form in your mind a clear, definite impression of the object; omit all details which are not essential to this impression, select only those details which produce or heighten the impression, and arrange the details so that they will contribute most directly to the impression.

Avoid the fatal error of supposing that the mere stringing together of details constitutes describing.

For example, you are asked to describe your schoolhouse. What is your impression of the building and the daily life in it, as a whole? Is the building cheerful and attractive, or the reverse? What makes it appear thus? Is your daily life one of generous scholarly emulation, or a tiresome round of disagreeable tasks? In short, what features give to your school its individual character?

The following is the right kind of description of the wrong kind of schoolroom :

I gazed upon the schoolroom into which he took me, as the most forlorn and desolate place I had ever seen. I see it now. A long room, with three long rows of desks, and six of forms, and bristling all round with pegs for hats and slates. Scraps of old copy-books and exercises litter the dirty floor. Some silkworms' houses, made of the same materials, are scattered over the desks. Two miserable little white mice, left behind by their owner, are running up and down in a fusty castle made of pasteboard and wire, looking in all the corners with their red eyes for anything to eat. A bird, in a cage very little bigger than himself, makes a mournful rattle now and then in hopping on his perch, two inches high, or dropping from it; but neither sings nor chirps. There is a strange unwholesome smell upon the room, like mildewed corduroys, sweet apples wanting air, and rotten books. There could not well be more ink splashed about it, if it had been roofless from its first construction, and the skies had rained, snowed, hailed, and blown ink through the varying seasons of the year.—
DAVID COPPERFIELD, i., ch. v.

Note how each item enhances the general impression of discomfort and untidiness.

A town or a city, no less than a room or a building, has its individual character. One town suggests intense mercantile or manufacturing activity; another, retired luxury and refinement. One bit of country suggests farming; another, fruit-raising; still another may offer more beauty than crops. In each case the writer must form his impression and conform his details to it.

The writer's purpose, apart from his impression, is not

always easy to formulate. In a work of fiction, the description exists for the sake of the characters; the description of houses, towns, and the like, makes the characters stand out, gives to them a touch of actuality. In other kinds of description the writer tries to discover what is noteworthy in his surroundings and to interest the reader in that. Even the most humdrum matters of every-day life, if presented as they appeal to and affect one mind, are pretty certain to appeal to other minds.

73. Sincerity; True Point of View.—Beginners do themselves much harm by copying or echoing the impressions of their elders. Yet in description, above all other writing, the one indispensable quality is absolute sincerity. No writer is justified in writing what he has not seen, heard, felt for himself. When, for example, the college Freshman, describing a walk through scenery which is beautiful but not overpowering, represents himself as taking off his hat to a waterfall, the unfeeling instructor draws his blue pencil through the passage and writes on the margin: "*False note!*" The Freshman has doubtless heard or read somewhere that to salute Nature is the "correct thing." The correctness, however, depends upon its genuineness; and the genuineness depends upon the Nature in question and the observer in question. The great writers should teach us *how* to feel, that is, how to open our eyes, and ears, and hearts; but they can never teach us *what* to feel. Each one of us must feel for himself.

Another weakness of the beginner is his inability to see objects from the true point of view. Objects at a distance are described in detail, as if they were near by. A night-scene is described with the minuteness which is possible only in the fullest daylight. A town viewed from an eminence is described as if the writer were standing in the street. All such errors come from the writer's failure to take some one point of view and keep to it. To get the right point of view requires usually some special exertion. Thus, if you wish to describe, like

Hawthorne, a town as seen from a steeple, the least you can do is climb the steeple and see with your own eyes. If you are to describe a night-scene, you must study the place by night. The following extracts, one from Hawthorne, the other from Hamlin Garland, are both descriptions of natural scenery. The first is a view from above and at a distance; the second, a near-by view on the level. In the second are many items (of sight and sound) which would not have been possible in the first.

What made the valley look still wider was the two or three varieties of weather that were visible on its surface, all at the same instant of time. Here lay the quiet sunshine; there fell the great black patches of ominous shadow from the clouds; and behind them, like a giant of league-long strides, came hurrying the thunderstorm which had already swept midway across the plain. In the rear of the approaching tempest brightened forth again the sunny splendor which its progress had darkened with so terrible a frown.

All round this majestic landscape the bald-peaked or forest-crowned mountains descended boldly upon the plain, etc.—*Marble Faun*, ii., ch. iii.

The scene was characteristically, wonderfully beautiful. It was about five o'clock in a day in late June, and the level plain was green and yellow, and infinite in reach as a sea; the lowering sun was casting over its distant swells a faint impalpable mist, through which the breaking teams on the neighboring claims ploughed noiselessly, as figures in a dream. The whistle of gophers, the faint, wailing, fluttering cry of the falling plover, the whirl of the swift-winged prairie pigeon, or the quack of a lonely duck, came through the shimmering air. The lark's infrequent whistle, piercingly sweet, broke from the longer grass in the swales near by. No other climate, sky, plain, could produce the same unnamable weird charm. No tree to wave, no grass to rustle; scarcely a sound of domestic life; only the faint melancholy sighing of the wind in the short grass, and the voices of the wild things of the prairie.—*Main Traveled Roads*.

74. Sequence.—In Description there is no necessary sequence like that of the chronological order of events in Narration. The writer must determine for himself the order in which to introduce the several items. For example:

(1) It was late one evening that¹ a carriage, drawn by mules, slowly

¹ See note upon Irving's *Sleepy Hollow*, § 46.

toiled its way up one of the passes of the Apennines. (2) It was through one of the wildest defiles, where a hamlet occurred only at distant intervals, perched on the summit of some rocky height, or the white towers of a convent peeped out from among the thick mountain foliage. (3) The carriage was of ancient and ponderous construction. Its faded embellishments spoke of former splendor, but its crazy springs and axle-trees creaked out the tale of present decline. (4) Within was seated a tall, thin old gentleman in a kind of military traveling dress, and a foraging-cap trimmed with fur, though the gray locks which stole from under it hinted that his fighting days were over. (5) Beside him was a pale, beautiful girl of eighteen, dressed in something of a northern or Polish costume. (6) One servant was seated in front, a rusty, crusty looking fellow, with a scar across his face, an orange-tawny *Schnurrbart* or pair of mustaches bristling from under his nose, and altogether the air of an old soldier.—IRVING: *The Belated Travelers*.

Observe the order: (1) Time; (2) Scene; (3) Carriage; (4) Father; (5) Daughter; (6) Servant. Some critics would prefer the order: (4) Servant; (5) Father; (6) Daughter. Certainly this order would make a better climax of interest; compare § 29. Do we not usually notice the persons outside before we notice those inside?

With the order in the following, however, no fault can be found. Note how, in the room, the guests are first mentioned, then the dogs. Then the master is described at some length. Lastly, the expression of the whole company is summed up:

On entering the dining room, I found a number of odd, vulgar-looking, rustic gentlemen, seated round a table, on which were bottles, decanters, tankards, pipes, and tobacco. Several dogs were lying about the room, or sitting and watching their masters, and one was gnawing a bone under a side-table. The master of the feast sat at the head of the board. He was greatly altered. He had grown thickset and rather gummy,¹ with a fiery foxy head of hair. There was a singular mixture of foolishness, arrogance, and conceit in his countenance. He was dressed in a vulgarly fine style, with leather breeches, a red waistcoat, and green coat, and was evidently, like his guests, a little flushed with drinking. The whole company stared at me with a whimsical muzzy,² look, like men whose senses were a little obfuscated by beer rather than wine.—IRVING: *The Booby Squire*.

¹ Puffy.

² Stupid.

In the following the reader passes in succession from the dress to the figure, to the hair, the features, the eyes :

She had on a light dress which sat loosely about her figure, but did not disguise its liberal, graceful outline. A heavy mass of straight jet-black hair had escaped from its fastening, and hung over her shoulders. Her grandly-cut features, pale, with the natural paleness of a brunette, had premature lines about them, telling that the years had been lengthened by sorrow, and the delicately-curved nostril, which seemed made to quiver with the proud consciousness of power and beauty, must have quivered to the heart-piercing griefs which had given that worn look to the corners of the mouth. Her wide-open black eyes had a strangely fixed, sightless gaze, as she paused at the turning, and stood silent before her husband.—GEORGE ELIOT: *Janet's Repentance*, ch. iv.

Climactic Order not Imperative.—In § 29 the student's attention was called to the desirability of arranging the sentence in climactic order, of placing details or items first and summing up last. This principle, however, does not apply to the paragraph ; see § 47. A narrative paragraph, it is true, by reason of its chronological sequence may produce somewhat of the effect of a climax ; but a descriptive paragraph has no such tendency. In description the general effect is very frequently placed at the beginning, the items following. Contrast the sentence quoted in § 29 :

With his broad sombrero, open shirt, fringed buckskin breeches, high-heeled boots, and heavy spurs, he was a picturesque young fellow.

with the following ; note the sentences italicized :

Picture to yourself a stern muscular figure, in fanciful bandit costume ; with pistols and poniard in belt ; his brawny neck bare ; a handkerchief loosely thrown around it, and the two ends in front strung with rings of all kinds, the spoils of travelers ; relics and medals hanging on his breast ; his hat decorated with various colored ribbons ; his vest and short breeches of bright colors, and finely embroidered ; his legs in buskins or leggins. Fancy him on a mountain height, among wild rocks and rugged oaks, leaning on his carbine, as if meditating some exploit ; while far below are beheld villages and villas, the scenes of his maraudings, with the wide Campagna dimly extending in the distance.—IRVING: *Bandit Chieftain*.

Note also the passage from Irving's *Christmas Eve*, § 46; from Dickens, § 72; from Hamlin Garland (the corn-field), § 44, and the prairie, § 73 (*the scene was characteristically, wonderfully beautiful. . . . No other climate, sky, plain, could produce the same untamable weird charm*).

In truth, a descriptive paragraph is usually more effective when the impression produced by the details is introduced before the details.

Practical Suggestions.—To the beginner the following suggestions may be of service.

1. Every object has one or more centers or central lines, to which details may be referred. For example, a city has its thoroughfares, its great squares or open places. A country scene is marked by a river, or a lake, or a range of hills, or something of the sort.

2. *Usually* it is better to begin with that which is near and pass step by step to the more remote. For example :

He lowered the window [of the stage-coach], and looked out at the rising sun. There was a ridge of ploughed land, with a plough upon it where it had been left last night when the horses were unyoked; beyond, a quiet coppice-wood, in which many leaves of burning red and golden yellow still remained upon the trees. Though the earth was cold and wet, the sky was clear, and the sun rose bright, placid, and beautiful.—DICKENS: *A Tale of Two Cities*, i., ch. iii.

3. It is better to keep the physical and the spiritual apart. For example, in the description of a city it is better to keep the appearance of the streets and buildings apart from the appearance and character of the people. In the description of a person it is customary to begin with the dress and body and end with the face and expression; note George Eliot's picture of Janet, quoted in this section. Scott's description of Brian in *Ivanhoe* follows a different order. In the first paragraph Scott speaks of Bryan's age, his spare athletic form, the cap on his head, his piercing eyes, his general expression of sternness. In the second paragraph Scott describes Brian's dress in detail; in a third paragraph he speaks of Brian's

squires, horses, and paraphernalia. The mention of the cap in the first paragraph is justifiable; the cap is so unusual in shape and color as to attract immediate attention and heighten the impression made by the wearer's face.

4. At all events, *decide upon some order of describing and keep to it.* Nothing is worse than skipping about, giving, for example, part of the dress, then part of the face, then the rest of the dress, and finally the rest of the face, interrupting perceptions of one kind with perceptions of another kind. For example, Dickens's description of Salem House, § 72, brilliant though it is, would have been better had the last sentence,—upon the ink,—been put among the other perceptions of *sight*, perhaps before the sentence beginning, "Scraps of . . .," and not separated from them by the *sound* of the bird in its cage and by the *smell* of the room.

5. *Diagram; Points of Reference.*—Occasionally a writer may begin his description by giving what may be called a "diagram." Thus Victor Hugo, in *Les Misérables*, opens his account of Waterloo thus:

Those who would get a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to lay down upon the ground in their mind a capital A. The left stroke of the A is the road from Nivelles, the right stroke is the road from Genappe, the cross of the A is the sunken road. . . . The top of the A is Mont Saint Jean; Wellington is there, etc.

De Quincey, in order to make clear the general situation of the incident narrated in his *English Mail-Coach*, appends the note:

Suppose a capital Y. Lancaster is at the foot of this letter; Liverpool at the top of the *right* branch; Manchester at the top of the *left* branch; Proud Preston at the center, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches; it is twenty-two miles along the stem,—viz., from Preston in the middle to Lancaster at the foot.

Without resorting to such mechanical devices, a careful writer can always indicate the points of reference. For example:

Here it was that I felt all the enthusiasm of my art suddenly awakened ; and I forgot in an instant all my perils and fatigues at this magnificent view of the sunrise in the midst of the mountains of the Abruzzi. It was on these heights that Hannibal first pitched his camp, and pointed out Rome to his followers. The eye embraces a vast extent of country. The minor height of Tusculum, with its villas and its sacred ruins, lies below ; the Sabine Hills and the Albanian mountains stretch out on either hand ; and beyond Tusculum and Frascati spreads out the immense Campagna, with its lines of tombs, and here and there a broken aqueduct stretching across it, and the towers and domes of the eternal city in the midst.—
IRVING : *The Painter's Adventure*.

75. Description in Narrative Form.—The theory was first expounded by Lessing, who called attention to the leading example, the Shield of Achilles, *Iliad*, xviii., 478–608. Here we have, not a description of the shield when made, but a minute account, step by step, of the *making* of it by Vulcan. In Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea* (iv., 1–59) the mother goes from place to place in search of her son ; the passage is in reality an indirect description of the stables, garden, vineyard, fields—in short, the family estate.

De Foe, wishing to inform his readers that Robinson Crusoe is upon an island of a certain size and kind, narrates thus :

My next work was to view the country, and seek a proper place for my habitation. . . . Where I was, I yet knew not—whether on the continent or on an island, whether inhabited or not inhabited, whether in danger of wild beasts or not. There was a hill not above a mile from me, which rose up very steep and high, and which seemed to overtop some other hills, which lay as in a ridge from it northward. I took out one of the fowling pieces, . . . and thus armed I traveled for discovery up to the top of that hill, where, after I had with great labour and difficulty got to the top, I saw my fate to my great affliction, viz., that I was in an island environed every way with the sea, no land to be seen, except some rocks which lay a great way off, and two small islands less than this, which lay about three leagues to the west.

One of the most striking examples in prose is the following, where De Quincey calls upon an imaginary painter to come to his aid :

But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. . . .

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family, the drawing-room; but, being contrived "a double debt to pay," it is also, and more justly, termed the library; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one on such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and, if you know how to paint such a thing, symbolically or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *a parte ante*, and *a parte post*; for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for one's self, paint me a lovely young woman sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's; but no, dear M——! ¹ not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty, or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil, etc.—*Confessions*, iii., 408.

(Compare Alice Carey's poem, *An Order for a Picture*.)

Strictly narrative description is possible only for a thoroughly trained writer. Usually it is found in the higher forms of literature; that it may be used in science, however, is evidenced by Tyndall's account of the glacier formations in the Chamounix valley. His description is in the form of a walk in which he plays the part of guide to the reader. For example:

Look up and down this side of the glacier. It is considerably riven, but as we advance the crevasses will diminish, and we shall find very few of them at the other side. Note this for future use. The ice is at first dirty; but the dirt soon disappears, and you come upon the clean crisp surface of the glacier. You have already noticed that the clean ice is white, and that from a distance it resembles snow rather than ice. This is caused by the

¹ His wife.

breaking up of the surface by the solar heat. When you pound transparent rock-salt into powder, it is as white as table-salt, and it is the minute fissuring of the surface of the glacier by the sun's rays that causes it to appear white. *Within* the glacier the ice is transparent. After an exhilarating passage we get upon the opposite lateral moraine and ascend the steep slope from it to the Montanvert Inn.—*Forms of Water*.

Yet even the ordinary writer ought to be able to imitate the manner of the following specimens, in which descriptive details are slipped into the narrative :

In fine weather, when by the spy-glass on the hill the sea was observed to run low upon the reef, there would be a sound of preparation in the very early morning ; and before the sun had risen from behind Ben More,¹ the tender would steam out of the bay. Over fifteen miles of the great blue Atlantic rollers she ploughed her way, trailing at her tail a brace of wallowing stone-lighters. The open ocean widened upon either board, and the hills of the mainland began to go down on the horizon, before she came to her unhomely destination, and lay-to at last where the rock clapped its black head above the swell, with the tall iron barrack on its spider legs, and the truncated tower, and the cranes waving their arms, and the smoke of the engine-fire rising in the mid-sea.—R. L. STEVENSON: *Memoirs of an Islet*.

Stevenson is describing the Dhu Heartach, a dangerous reef, on which a lighthouse is in process of erection. The stone, dressed into shape, is carried over from the island of Earraid.

As Alice came into the room, her eyes fell upon the carpenter, who was standing near its centre, clad in a green woollen jacket, a pair of loose breeches, open at the knees, and with a long pocket for his rule, the end of which protruded ; it was as proper a mark of the artisan's calling, as Mr. Pyncheon's full-dress sword of that gentleman's aristocratic pretensions. A glow of artistic approval brightened over Alice Pyncheon's face ; she was struck with admiration—which she made no attempt to conceal—of the remarkable comeliness, strength, and energy of Maule's figure.—HAWTHORNE: *The House of the Seven Gables*, ch. xiii.

This is the first description of the carpenter.

Scott, in *The Lady of the Lake*, i., xv, has given a specimen of describing by means of the impression produced upon

¹ Literally, Big Hill, the name of a mountain on the large island of Mull.

the mind of an observer. Fitz-James, seeing Loch Katrine for the first time, supposes the neighborhood uninhabited; instantly his vivid imagination peoples certain conspicuous parts of the landscape, designated by the words *bold brow, soft vale, meadow, groves, islet*, with future occupants. We literally see through his eyes. Compare the description of Edinburgh in *Marmion*, iv., xxx.

76. Mixed Narrative and Description.—A narrative, whether of fact or of fiction, may be restricted to the mere telling of what has been said and done. Usually, however, the narrative is interspersed with descriptions of the place of action (scene), of the persons taking part, and the like. Thus an account of the life of Washington would be scarcely intelligible without some description of Virginia and the other colonies. Frequently description is omitted from a short story. Yet even in short stories the practice varies; contrast the lack of description in Irving's story *The Wife* with the wealth of description in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. One kind of description is almost indispensable to every narrative, namely, the delineation of the outward appearance of the persons taking part. Upon this delineation the greatest writers have put forth their best efforts. Every great history or biography, every great work of fiction, is full of such portraits. Compare George Eliot's portrait of Janet, § 74, with Motley's portrait of Charles the Fifth:

Charles the Fifth was then fifty-five years and eight months old; but he was already decrepit with premature old age. He was of about the middle height, and had been athletic and well-proportioned. Broad in the shoulders, deep in the chest, thin in the flank, very muscular in the arms and legs, he had been able to match himself with all competitors in the tourney and the ring, and to vanquish the bull with his own hand in the favorite national amusement of Spain. He had been able in the field to do the duty of captain and soldier, to endure fatigue and exposure, and every privation except fasting. These personal advantages were now departed. Crippled in hands, knees, and legs, he supported himself with difficulty upon a crutch, with the aid of an attendant's shoulder. In face he had always been extremely ugly, and time had certainly not improved

his physiognomy. His hair, once of a light color, was now white with age, close-clipped and bristling; his beard was gray, coarse, and shaggy. His forehead was spacious and commanding; the eye was dark-blue, with an expression both majestic and benignant. His nose was aquiline but crooked. The lower part of his face was famous for its deformity. The under lip, a Burgundian inheritance, as faithfully transmitted as the duchy and county, was heavy and hanging; the lower jaw protruding so far beyond the upper, that it was impossible for him to bring together the few fragments of teeth which still remained, or to speak a whole sentence in an intelligible voice.—*The Rise of the Dutch Republic*.

Character-Description.—Character is something intangible, invisible, and therefore not to be drawn. In strictness we can only mention certain mental traits of a person, such as courage, jealousy, prudence, and so forth. And, in any case, character-drawing, except in a very simple form, is too difficult for the beginner. J. R. Green's characterization of Queen Elizabeth will serve as a specimen :

Her moral temper recalled in its strange contrasts the mixed blood within her veins. She was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn. From her father she inherited her frank and hearty address, her love of popularity and of free intercourse with the people, her dauntless courage, and her amazing self-confidence. Her harsh, man-like voice, her impetuous will, her pride, her furious outbursts of anger, came to her with her Tudor blood. . . . But strangely in contrast with the violent outlines of her Tudor temper stood the sensuous, self-indulgent nature she derived from Anne Boleyn. Splendor and pleasure were with Elizabeth the very air she breathed. . . . She loved gayety and laughter and wit. A happy retort or a finished compliment never failed to win her favor. . . . Her vanity remained, even to old age, the vanity of a coquette in her teens. No adulation was too fulsome for her, no flattery of her beauty too gross, etc.—*Short History*, etc., ch. vii., sec. 3.

Every writer ought to be able, without formal character-drawing, to let a person *reveal his character in his actions*; the method is narrative. Thus Hawthorne, without telling us in so many words that the rich Mr. Higginbotham is stingy, lets the niece describe him :

I left Kimballton this morning to spend the vacation of commencement week with a friend, about five miles from Parker's Falls. My *generous*

uncle, when he heard me on the stairs, called me to his bedside and gave me two dollars and fifty cents, to pay my stage fare, and *another dollar for my extra expenses*. He then laid his pocket-book under his pillow, shook hands with me, and advised me to *take some biscuit in my bag, instead of breakfasting on the road*.—*Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe*.

Not infrequently an event is treated in such a manner that the reader is puzzled to say whether he is reading a narrative or a description. There may be a thread of action running through the whole, and to that extent the writing is a narrative. On the other hand, the descriptive details are so prominent that the whole produces the effect of a description. An example is the battle of Waterloo, Byron's *Childe Harold*, iii., 21–28: "There was a sound of revelry by night," etc. Another is Wordsworth's *Feast of Brougham Castle*, commemorating the exile of Lord Clifford and his return after the Wars of the Roses. Still another is the death of Judge Pyncheon, *The House of the Seven Gables*, ch. xviii.; also the drowning of Steerforth and Ham in *David Copperfield*, ii., ch. xxvi. Numerous examples may also be found in every-day reading, in the accounts of public events, such as the inauguration of a president, the dedication of a new public building, a boat-race, a ball-game. The fact that something is begun and finished makes the writing a narrative; yet the wealth of details lavished upon the scene and the spectators produces the effect of a description. And, indeed, such a piece of writing is often, if not usually, called a description; a better term would be "account." Note also the following:

And now the cloud spread with astonishing rapidity—spread and sank, cancelling the sun, shrouding the Gni¹ to its waist, curling in smoky wreaths among the battlements of the Cornobastone,¹ turning the lake from sapphire to sombre steel, filling the entire valley with a strange mixture of darkness and an uncanny pallid light. Overhead it hung like a vast canopy of leaden-hued cotton-wool; at the west it had a fringe of fiery crimson, beyond which a strip of clear sky on the horizon diffused a dull metallic yellow, like tarnished brass.

Presently, in the distance, there was a low growl of thunder; in a min-

¹ Names of mountain ranges.

ute, a louder, angrier growl—as if the first were a menace which had not been heeded. Then there was a violent gush of wind—cold; smelling of the forests from which it came; scattering everything before it, dust, dead leaves, the fallen petals of flowers; making the trees writhe and labour, like giants wrestling with invisible giants; making the short grass shudder; corrugating the steel surface of the lake. Then two or three big rain-drops fell—and then, the deluge.—HARLAND: *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box*, ch. xvii.

77. Impressional Description; Circumstantial.—Of late years these terms have been used in extremely technical senses. By an “impressional” description is meant one in which every detail bears directly upon a *single* sensation or perception. For example:

Noon in the country is very still: the birds do not sing; the workmen are not in the field; the sheep lay their noses to the ground; and the herds stand in pools under shady trees, lashing their sides, but otherwise motionless. The mills upon the brook far above have ceased for an hour their labor; and the stream softens its rustle, and sinks away from the sedgy banks. The heat plays upon the meadow in noiseless waves, and the beech-leaves do not stir.

Note how every detail brings out the “stillness” of nature. Compare the following:

It was a heavy mass of building, that château of Monsieur le Marquis, with a large stone courtyard before it, and two stone sweeps of staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal door. A stony business altogether, with heavy stone balustrades, and stone urns, and stone flowers, and stone faces of men, and stone heads of lions, in all directions. As if the Gorgon's head had surveyed it, when it was finished, two centuries ago. DICKENS: *A Tale of Two Cities*, ii., ch. ix.

The stony château matches the stony heart of its owner. See also the quotations from Stevenson and Du Maurier, § 70, and the paragraph on the cornfield, § 44.

The following is “circumstantial”:

There was a sloping lawn, a fine stream winding at the foot of it, and a tract of park beyond, with noble clumps of trees and herds of deer. At a distance was a neat hamlet, with the smoke from the cottage chimneys hanging over it; and a church with its dark spire in strong relief against the clear, cold sky. The house was surrounded with evergreens, according

to the English custom. A robin, perched upon the top of a mountain ash that hung its clusters of red berries just before my window, was basking himself in the sunshine, and piping a few querulous notes; and a peacock was displaying all the glories of his train, and strutting with the pride and gravity of a Spanish grandee, on the terrace walk below.

Dickens's description of Salem House, § 72, is also circumstantial; and George Eliot's portrait of Janet, § 74, and indeed most of the descriptions in this chapter. A circumstantial description, then, is one in which the attention of writer and reader is not concentrated upon one feature to the exclusion of every other.

The difference between impressional and circumstantial can scarcely be put in exact words; it must be felt, and can be felt by every one who will study the specimens just given. The term "impressional," however, is certainly embarrassing. For *all* description is at bottom the creation of an *impression* in the mind, first of the writer, then of the reader; see § 72. Consequently, neither the word impression nor any derivative of it ought to be used to single out one form of describing. There is need of a better term, just as there is need of a better term than the barbarous "electrocute" for "execute by electricity." This better term has not yet been invented.

Nor is the term "circumstantial" altogether satisfactory; the beginner may infer from it that a description of this kind has more circumstances, that is, more items or details. This would be a grave error. The difference between an impressional and a circumstantial description is to be found not in the number of details but in the manner of using them. In an impressional description, every item is subordinated to a single *theme-sensation*; in a circumstantial description, the several items are co-ordinated, grouped in a *tableau*.

78. Peculiarities of Expression.—In description short sentences are usually better than long. Certainly nothing should be said which the reader can easily supply, or which is a mere repetition in different words. For example;

Tears dropping from the shadow of the ugly sun-bonnet *she wore*, § 26.
A swirling sand-storm sprang up again in the street below and a *simoon of dust* almost hid from him the faces of those who sat in the carriages.

What is the difference here between "a swirling sand-storm" and "a simoon of dust"? Only one phrase is needed.

Occasionally we find, even in the best descriptive writing, a sentence of considerable length. Thus:

Besides, some of the smaller cities are charming. If they have an old church or two, a few stately mansions of former grantees, here and there an old dwelling with the second story projecting (for the convenience of shooting the Indians knocking at the front-door with their tomahawks),—if they have, scattered about, those mighty square houses built something more than half a century ago, and standing like architectural boulders dropped by the former diluvium of wealth whose reflux wave has left them as its monument,—if they have gardens with elbowed apple-trees that push their branches over the high board-fence and drop their fruit on the sidewalk,—if they have a little grass in the side-streets, enough to betoken quiet without proclaiming decay,—I think I could go to pieces, after my life's work were done, in one of those tranquil places as sweetly as in any cradle that an old man may be rocked to sleep in.—O. W. HOLMES, *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.

This, the reader will notice, is a summing-up. It is saved from unwieldiness, first, by the strong fiber of personality running through the whole, second, by the repetition of "if they have." Still, to write in this vein, one should be an Autocrat. The following, equally delicate of touch, is less abnormal in structure:

A very ancient woman, in a white short gown and a green petticoat, with a string of gold beads about her neck, and what looked like a night-cap on her head, had brought a quantity of yarn to barter for the commodities of the shop. She was probably the very last person in town who still kept the time-honored spinning-wheel in constant revolution. It was worth while to hear the croaking and hollow tones of the old lady and the pleasant voice of Phoebe mingling in one twisted thread of talk, etc.—HAWTHORNE: *Seven Gables*, ch. v.

It is always a gain to insert descriptive details incidentally. Thus:

Mr. Cruncher reposed under a patchwork counterpane, like a Harlequin at home. At first he slept heavily, but by degrees began to roll and surge in bed, with ¹ his *spiky* hair looking as if it must tear the sheets to ribbons.—DICKENS: *A Tale of Two Cities*, ii., ch. i.

Sentence-connectives, see § 51, are usually undesirable; they tend to make the description too formal. On the other hand, expressions of place should be used freely, especially when the attention is shifted from one part of the object to another. Note “here,” “there,” “beyond,” “in the rear,” “all round,” in the passage from Hawthorne, § 73.

In § 69 the student was advised to be sparing in the use of adjectives in narration. Description, on the other hand, is the proper field for adjectives, and indeed for “pictorial” expressions, nouns or phrases, which arrest the reader’s attention and force him to think. No rules can be given, of course, for the choice of such pictorial expressions; the student must examine closely the practice of good writers. Thus, in the passage just quoted from Holmes, note the significance of these phrases: “architectural bowlders,” “diluvium of wealth,” “elbowed apple-trees”; note all the adjectives in the passage from Ruskin, § 70; the phrases “aristocratic flowers,” “plebeian vegetables” in Hawthorne, § 70. Consider the amount of history suggested by the italicized phrase in the following:

The great door clanged behind him, and Monsieur the Marquis crossed a hall grim with certain old boar-spears, swords, and knives of the chase; grimmer with certain heavy riding-rods and riding-whips, of which many a peasant, *gone to his benefactor Death*, had felt the weight when his lord was angry.—DICKENS: *A Tale of Two Cities*, ii., ch. ix.

EXPOSITION.

79. Definition.—Exposition is merely a technical term for that process which ordinarily we call “explanation.” When we give in words an account of what we have seen, actually or in imagination, we narrate or we describe; when, however,

¹ See § 25. The student may get some profit by noting the unnecessary *with’s* in the extracts in this chapter.

we undertake to make clear the "why" of anything, to set forth the significance of a person or an object for other persons or objects, we expound.

Thus, to write of the death of a certain person is description or narration; but to write upon death in general is exposition. To delineate the features of a certain man is description; to tell wherein man in general differs from other animals is exposition. To explain the working of a steam-engine or to set forth the advantages of neatness is also exposition.

Text-books of science, history, literature, are expository; so are essays. In text-books and essays, it is true, we often find descriptive or narrative passages, but the book or essay is in the main expository. Its aim is to acquaint us with the *general* truths of science or history, or with the *general* relation of an individual to his times. For example, Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings, although it contains a good deal of narration and description, is, on the whole, an exposition of the policy of Hastings, his services to England, and his position in the history of the world.

As descriptive and narrative passages occur in writings which are essentially exposition, so expository passages occur in writings which are essentially description or narration. Such an expository passage usually embodies a passing reflection or meditation; it *moralizes*, we say, upon the persons described or the events narrated. A graceful example is in the scene where Donatello calls upon Miriam in her studio and finds her "busied with the feminine task of mending a pair of gloves":

There is something extremely pleasant, and even touching—at least, of very sweet, soft, and winning effect—in this peculiarity of needle-work, distinguishing women from men. Our own sex is incapable of any such by-play aside from the main business of life; but women—be they of what earthly rank they may, however gifted with intellect or genius, or endowed with awful beauty—have always some little handiwork ready to fill the tiny gap of every vacant moment. A needle is familiar to the fingers of them all. A queen, no doubt, plies it on occasion; the woman-poet can

use it as adroitly as her pen; the woman's eye, that has discovered a new star, turns from its glory to send the polished little instrument gleaming along the hem of her kerchief. . . . A vast deal of human sympathy runs along this electric line, stretching from the throne to the wicker-chair of the humblest seamstress, and keeping high and low in a species of communion with their kindred beings, etc.—HAWTHORNE: *Marble Faun*, i., ch. 5.

By far the greater part of composition in school and in college is expository. For example, of the six school papers mentioned by title in § 64, five are wholly in exposition; the sixth is in part at least expository. Of the college papers outlined in § 59, nearly one-half are expository; the five,—a comparatively large number,—in narration and description were selected from the work of a class receiving instruction in that form of writing. Left to himself, the student usually drifts into exposition. Further, it should be remembered that the answers to examination questions are almost invariably paragraphs of exposition. Occasionally, in geography or in history, the student may be asked to narrate or describe; otherwise he is asked to write what he knows of a general subject. Such writing is, of course, exposition.

80. Varieties.—The following specimens will illustrate the leading varieties of exposition.

I. Definition.—Defining an object means separating it from all other objects by marking the boundary-lines. Thus, a telescope is said to define accurately when it enables us to see clearly the lines of a heavenly body. A photograph is poor in definition when the lines are faint or blurred. In rhetoric and logic we define a term when we distinguish it from every other term.

Defining, in the strict sense, is extremely difficult for those who have not mastered logical methods, for it is essentially logical in its procedure. It consists in stating the genus and the differentia, *i. e.*, the class to which the object defined belongs, and the peculiarities which differentiate it from everything else in that class. Further, a definition must not contain the word to be defined or a mere synonym of that word.

For example, to call *description* that form of writing which *describes*, or to say that to *die* is to undergo a *mortal* change, is not defining.

Ruskin defines architecture as

"The art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them contributes to his mental health, power, and pleasure."—*Seven Lamps*, ch. i.

In other words, building ("*edifice*") is the genus; man's pleasure is the differentia.

The sciences, especially mathematics and physics, abound in rigorous definitions. For example, "a circle is a plane figure contained by one line everywhere equidistant from a point within called the centre"; here, plane figure is the genus, radius-measurement the differentia.

In human affairs the difficulty of defining increases in proportion as we pass from the material to the spiritual, until at last definition—in any just sense—becomes an impossibility. We may readily define a "minor" to be "a person of either sex who has not attained the age at which full civil rights are accorded." But to frame a legal definition of "property" is much less easy. To define "church," *i. e.*, not the building, but the association of persons for religious purposes, is perhaps impossible. Catholics and Protestants would not agree, nor would any two Protestant denominations agree wholly. "Literature," "eloquence," "poetry," "education," are not to be defined.

Loose or Indirect Definition.—If a term cannot be defined exactly, the sense may be conveyed approximately. Thus, Swift defined style to be "proper words in their proper places." Emerson characterized eloquence as "a taking sovereign possession of the audience"; De Quincey wrote: "By eloquence we understand the outflow of powerful feelings upon occasions fitted to excite them." Matthew Arnold defined criticism to be "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." This does not distinguish criticism from learning, on the one hand,

nor from teaching, on the other ; but it relieves criticism from the charge of being mere negative fault-finding, and makes it a positive and useful accomplishment.

Most of the definitions in literature are of this loose kind.

2. *Classification.*—An understanding of the process may be had from its application in science. Thus, in discussing the available sources of terrestrial energy, Tait classifies them as :

First (potential). 1. Fuel, including wood, coal, zinc, for galvanic battery, etc. 2. Food of animals. 3. Ordinary water-power. 4. Tidal water-power. *Second* (kinetic). 1. Winds. 2. Currents (ocean-currents). 3. Hot springs and volcanoes.

He then adds cautiously :

There are other very small sources known to us, exceedingly small ; but these I have named include our principal resources.—*Recent Advances*, vii., p. 160.

Having thus classified them, he proceeds to show that almost all are to be traced back to solar radiation. The inference is that terrestrial energy, all but a very small part, is due to the rays of the sun.

In matters of human invention and in purely spiritual matters rigorous classification, like rigorous definition, becomes difficult and almost impossible. For example, the government of the United States is divided into three factors : legislative, executive, judicial. Yet inasmuch as the chief executive, the President, has also, by virtue of his veto, a direct share in law-making, he must be classified—to that extent—with Congress. On the other hand, the Senate, through its right of rejecting presidential appointments, has a share in executing the law. Still further, the Senate and House, through the right of impeachment, are invested with judicial functions.

This overlapping of division-lines is technically called *Cross-Division*.

The tendency to cross-division exists in all classification which does not rest upon scientific criteria. The young reader can test this for himself. If he is a member of a large school, let him classify all the scholars. He may group them by

school classes; he may group them according to sex, if the school is mixed; he may group them according to scholarship, into poor, fair, good; or into boarders and day-scholars. These several groupings would cross one another.

The reader can further test his ability to classify by grouping the persons of his acquaintance, the books that he may see in a library, the studies that he is interested in.

3. *General Statement*.—Under this head are included general phenomena, general laws, general relations.

The interesting *phenomenon* of slave-holding among insects is thus set forth:

This remarkable instinct was first discovered in the *Formica* (*Polyerges*) *rufescens* by Pierre Huber, a better observer even than his celebrated father. This ant is absolutely dependent on its slaves; without their aid, the species would certainly become extinct in a single year. The males and fertile females do no work of any kind, and the workers or sterile females, though most energetic and courageous in capturing slaves, do no other work. They are incapable of making their own nests, or of feeding their own larvæ. When the old nest is found inconvenient, and they have to migrate, it is the slaves which determine the migration, and actually carry their masters in their jaws. So utterly helpless are the masters, that when Huber shut up thirty of them without a slave, but with plenty of the food which they like best, and with their own larvæ and pupæ to stimulate them to work, they did nothing; they could not even feed themselves, and many perished of hunger. Huber then introduced a single slave (*F. fusca*), and she instantly set to work, fed and saved the survivors; made some cells and tended the larvæ, and put all to rights.—DARWIN: *Origin of Species*, ch. viii.

The general phenomena of man's social and spiritual life are far more difficult to state fully and accurately. The difficulty is threefold. First, the facts and data upon which to generalize are very hard to get. Second, we may approach such questions in a spirit of prejudice. The historian, for instance, is apt to sympathize with one of two conflicting parties in the past because of its resemblance, real or assumed, to his own party in the present. There is even a third source of error. In writing that is *literary* rather than scientific, the writer is often desirous of writing *effectively*, as it is called.

He seeks to produce by his manner a deep impression on the reader, and in so doing often overstates, sometimes even misstates, his facts. The following presentation of literary Bohemia in the first half of the eighteenth century is an instance :

As every climate has its peculiar diseases, so every walk of life has its peculiar temptations. The literary character, assuredly, has always had its share of faults : vanity, jealousy, morbid sensibility. To these faults were now superadded the faults which are commonly found in men whose livelihood is precarious, and whose principles are exposed to the trial of severe distress. All the vices of the gambler and of the beggar were blended with those of the author. The prizes in the wretched lottery of book-making were scarcely less ruinous than the blanks. If good fortune came, it came in such a manner that it was almost certain to be abused. After months of starvation and despair, a full third night or a well-received dedication filled the pocket of the lean, ragged, unwashed poet with guineas. He hastened to enjoy those luxuries with the images of which his mind had been haunted while he was sleeping amidst the cinders and eating potatoes at the Irish ordinary in Shoe Lane. A week of taverns soon qualified him for another year of night-cellars. Such was the life of Savage, of Boyse, and of a crowd of others. Sometimes blazing in gold-laced hats and waistcoats ; sometimes lying in bed because their coats had gone to pieces, or wearing paper cravats because their linen was in pawn ; sometimes drinking champagne and Tokay with Betty Careless ; sometimes standing at the window of an eating-house in Porridge Island, to snuff up the scent of what they could not afford to taste : they knew luxury ; they knew beggary ; but they never knew comfort.—MACAULAY : *Boswell's Johnson*.

There is undoubtedly much truth in all this. Yet every thoughtful student will suspect that it is also highly overwrought. Overstatement is, in fact, the prevalent blemish in Macaulay's method.

The ability to see clearly and state fairly is a matter of sober temperament and philosophic inquiry rather than of mere knowledge. The following, upon Chapman's translation of Homer, illustrates Matthew Arnold's method in contrast with Macaulay's.

But as eminently as Homer is plain, so eminently is the Elizabethan literature in general, and Chapman in particular, fanciful. Steeped in humours and fantasticality up to its very lips, the Elizabethan age, newly

arrived at the free use of the human faculties after their long term of bondage, and delighting to exercise them freely, suffers from its own extravagance in this first exercise of them, can hardly bring itself to see an object quietly or to describe it temperately. . . . In dealing with works of profane literature, in dealing with poetical works above all, which highly stimulated them, one may say¹ that the minds of the Elizabethan translators were *too* active; that they could not forbear importing so much of their own, and this of a most peculiar and Elizabethan character, into their original, that they effaced the character of the original itself.—*On Translating Homer*.

The following is in a lighter vein :

At almost every step in life we meet with young men . . . for whom we anticipate wonderful things, but of whom, even after much and careful inquiry, we never happen to hear another word. The effervescence of youth and passion, and the fresh glows of the intellect and imagination, endow them with a false brilliancy which makes fools of themselves and other people. Like certain chintzes, calicoes, and ginghams, they show finely in their first newness, but cannot stand the sun and rain, and assume a very sober aspect after washing-day.—HAWTHORNE: *Seven Gables*, ch. xii.

The process of expounding a *general law* is illustrated by Tait's formulation—based upon Newton's *Principia*—of the law of gravitation :

Every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle with a force whose direction is that of the line joining the two, and whose magnitude is directly as the product of their masses, and inversely as the square of their distance from each other.—*Properties of Matter* (vii.), p. 110.

The phenomenon is thus *measurable*, directly according to mass, inversely according to distance.

In human affairs—politics, history, ethics, literature, etc.—it is far more difficult to formulate general laws. Much, indeed, that is popularly called “law” is in strictness no law at all, but merely the statement of a phenomenon that occurs frequently, perhaps usually, but not invariably. Thus, not a few of the laws of political economy are nothing more than statements of general tendencies. They operate “in the long

¹ Why did Arnold not write: “The minds of the Elizabethan writers were, one may say, too active”? See § 15, 28.

run," but not in every single case. Therefore we cannot count upon them as we count upon the law of gravitation. For example, although men usually buy where they can buy cheapest, there are exceptions; one man may have certain prejudices or habits which lead him to one shop rather than another.

The "laws" that we read in our statute-books are not laws, but statutes, *i. e.*, the will of the people expressed through the legislature. And, like every other expression of will, they can be recalled, *i. e.*, repealed. Thus, the Silver Bill was merely the will of Congress that so much silver should be bought every year by the Treasury. When repealed in 1893, it ceased to be the national will.

Many of the so-called laws in historical and political writings are only hasty and untrustworthy generalizations. The following, however, deserves careful attention, as a formulation of the fundamental law of society; though abstruse, it is anything but obscure:

If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law. That convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of constitution which are formed under it. Every sort of legislative, judicial, or executory power are its creatures. They can have no being in any other state of things; and how can any man claim, under the conventions of civil society, rights which do not so much as suppose its existence? Rights which are absolutely repugnant to it? One of the first motives to civil society, and which becomes one of its fundamental rules, is, *that no man should be judge in his own cause*. By this each person has at once divested himself of the first fundamental right of an uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause. He abdicates all right to be his own governor. He inclusively, in a great measure, abandons the right of self-defence, the first law of nature. Man cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and of a civil state together. That he may obtain justice, he gives up his right of determining what it is in points the most essential to him. That he may secure some liberty, he makes a surrender in trust of the whole of it.—BURKE: *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

By *general relation* is here meant the connection between two things, the influence exerted by one upon the other.

Thus, we may speak of the relation between the United States and England, and this relation we may discuss in its bearing upon politics, trade, literature, science, religion. Again, we may discuss the general relation between man and wife, between parent and child; or the relation between the citizen and the State.

The most general relation is that of *cause and effect*; it exists both in nature and in human society. When demonstrated in nature it is susceptible of strict scientific exposition. Thus, Tyndall explains the blue of the atmosphere to be caused by the reflection of light from extremely minute particles:

Small in mass, the vastness in point of number of the particles of our sky may be inferred from the continuity of its light. It is not in broken patches, nor at scattered points that the heavenly azure is revealed. To the observer on the summit of Mont Blanc the blue is as uniform and coherent as if it formed the surface of the most close-grained solid. A marble dome would not exhibit a stricter continuity. . . . Everywhere through the atmosphere those sky-particles are strewn. They fill the Alpine valleys, spreading like a delicate gauze in front of the slopes of pine. They sometimes so swathe the peaks with light as to abolish their definition. This year I have seen the Weisshorn thus dissolved in opalescent air. By proper instruments the glare thrown from the sky-particles against the retina may be quenched, and then the mountain which it obliterated starts into sudden definition. Its extinction in front of a dark mountain resembles exactly the withdrawal of a veil. It is the light then taking possession of the eye, and not the particles acting as opaque bodies, that interferes with the definition. By day this light quenches the stars; even by moonlight it is able to exclude from vision all stars between the fifth and the eleventh magnitude. It may be likened to a noise, and the stellar radiance to a whisper drowned by the noise.—*Fragments* (vii.).

A causal relation in human affairs is less easy to expound. Occasionally, but not often, we may discern a cause without apparent effect. More commonly we are puzzled by an effect without assignable cause. Even where we plainly discern both cause and effect, we may fail to state the *ratio* very exactly. For example, there is, beyond doubt, a connection between poverty and crime, yet this relation cannot be for-

mulated as exactly as the corresponding relation between bad food and certain kinds of disease.

For a specimen of effect without assignable cause the reader may study Webster's speech in the celebrated Kenniston case. One Major Goodridge alleged that he had been attacked and wounded and robbed of a large sum of money while travelling at night, and charged the Kenniston brothers and some other men with the crime. Webster defended successfully his clients by his sharp cross-examination, in which he involved Goodridge in many contradictions. In his speech to the jury he touched upon the absence of motive :

But, on the threshold of the inquiry, every one puts the question, What motive had the prosecutor to be guilty of the abominable conduct of feigning a robbery? It is difficult to assign motives. The jury do not know enough of his character or circumstances. Such things have happened, and may happen again. Suppose he owed money in Boston, and had it not to pay? Who knows how high he might estimate the value of a plausible apology? Some men have also a whimsical ambition of distinction. There is no end to the variety of modes in which human vanity exhibits itself. A story of this nature excites the public sympathy. It attracts general attention. It causes the name of the prosecutor to be celebrated as a man who has been attacked, and, after a manly resistance, overcome by robbers, and who has renewed his resistance as soon as returning life and sensation enabled him, and, after a second conflict, has been quite subdued, beaten and bruised out of all sense and sensation, and finally left for dead on the field. It is not easy to say how far such motives, trifling and ridiculous as most men would think them, might influence the prosecutor, when connected with any expectation of favor or indulgence, if he wanted such, from his creditors.—*Defence of the Kennistons.*

It may be observed that had Webster been trying to convict Goodridge, instead of trying to exculpate his clients, he would undoubtedly have failed; his presentation of motives was enough for defence, but not enough for prosecution.

It is also to be noticed that Webster uses the word "motive." This is the correct designation of those impulses which urge a person to the doing of an act.

The word "instrument" or "agency" is used to designate

the person or thing by means of which a result is produced. A railroad, for instance, is an instrument or means of communication. In writing upon the advantages of railroads we undertake to state the good results that come from using them. We may in like manner state the advantages of the telegraph, of the telephone, etc.

81. Relation to Narration and Description.—The difference between narration or description and exposition, though in the main clear enough, may at times puzzle the beginner; the more so since the term “description” is often applied popularly to writing which is genuine exposition. The beginner need only bear in mind that in narrating or describing he deals always with the *individual*; in exposition he deals with the *general*, or with the *individual as representative of the general*.

For example, when the naturalist sets before us the outward appearance of a certain country, he is describing; when he gives an account of his journey day by day, he is narrating. If, on the other hand, he compares this country with other countries, if he discusses its availability for colonization, the influence of mountains and rivers upon its climate, upon the physique and character of its inhabitants, he is generalizing—that is, he is expounding. If the naturalist recounts the movements and habits of a certain animal, he is expounding; for he puts the individual before us *as representative of the class*. For example, the remarks by Darwin upon the ant, § 80, are genuine exposition. Compare them with Ruskin’s remarks upon the Rhone, § 70, genuine description; also with Stanley’s account of his camping, § 67, genuine narrative. When the naturalist discusses an individual animal, he presupposes that it resembles all the other animals of that species; if there were no such resemblance, his discussion would be *without scientific value*, since science deals only with the general.

In the careless speech of every-day life a writer is said to “describe” a machine—for example, a steam-engine. Such

use of language is, to say the least, unfortunate. The writer, even though he may draw his explanation from one particular engine actually in sight, is nevertheless generalizing. That particular engine is merely the "type" of a hundred or a thousand, all working alike, and the explanation must fit them all equally well, by stating the scientific principles embodied in them all. Genuine description should fit one and only one individual in the world; consequently it cannot be too specific, too characteristic.

The distinction is of the highest practical value. When the would-be describer is advised to choose "salient details, those that leap to the senses"; when he is informed that "in a certain sense all worthy description is subjective—that is, it cannot be worthy unless it represents the seeing of the writer"; when he is ordered by Guy de Maupassant "to make clear to me wherein your cab-horse differs from fifty other cab-horses standing in the line," the writer should remember that all these remarks are aimed only at genuine description. They would be fatal to the "description" of a machine, of a chemical process, of an anatomical dissection. Scientific description deals, not with salient details, but with general principles; reproduces, not what one pair of eyes may see, but what every eye ought to see; demonstrates wherein fifty or a thousand horses are identical.

In historical writing the line between exposition and description is sometimes hard to draw; our decision will turn upon the writer's *purpose*. If that purpose is merely to illustrate, by means of personal traits, the significance of a certain great ruler, the writing is expository rather than descriptive. Motley's presentation of Charles the Fifth, § 76, is description; it gives the great emperor as he appeared to the eye. Whereas J. R. Green's characterization of Charles the Second is no longer description, but evidently exposition: it sets up nation and king in a parallel, reveals Charles's real object under his apparent recklessness, points out the danger of his policy:

Changed to the very core, yet hardly conscious of the change, drifting indeed steadily towards a wider knowledge and a firmer freedom, but still a mere medley of Puritan morality and social revolt, of traditional loyalty and political scepticism, of bigotry and free inquiry, of science and Popish plots, the England of the Restoration was reflected in its King. What his subjects saw in Charles was a pleasant brown-faced gentleman playing with his spaniels, or flinging cakes to the water-fowl in the park. To all outer seeming Charles was the most consummate of idlers. . . . That Charles had great natural parts, no one doubted. . . . His temper was pleasant and social, his manners perfect, and there was a careless freedom and courtesy in his address which won over everybody who came into his presence. . . . But courage and wit and ability seemed to have been bestowed on Charles in vain. . . . Charles made no secret in fact of his hatred of business. Nor did he give to outer observers any sign of ambition. The one thing he seemed in earnest about was sensual pleasure. . . . It was difficult for Englishmen to believe that any real danger to liberty could come from an idler and a voluptuary. . . . But in the very difficulty of believing this lay half the King's strength. . . . Charles had no settled plan of tyranny, but he meant to rule as independently as he could, and from the beginning to the end of his reign there never was a moment when he was not doing something to carry out his aim. . . . Where bribes, flattery, and management failed, Charles was content to yield and to wait till his time came again.

This is undoubtedly clear and forcible exposition ; but it is not description, it gives no portrait of the man Charles. To say of Green's *History* that "Elizabeth, James the First, Cromwell, Charles the Second, and Walpole are made to live in its pages by the same literary device by which Tom Jones, Dr. Primrose, and Becky Sharp live in the pages of fiction" is to misapprehend the art of fiction. This is how James the First "lives" in the pages of Scott :

"Weel dune, Bash—weel dune, Battie," he exclaimed, as he came up. "By the honour of a king, ye are a credit to the Braes of Balwhither !—Haud my horse, man," he called out to Nigel, without stopping to see to whom he had addressed himself—"Haud my naig, and help me doun out o' the saddle—deil ding your saul, sirra, canna ye mak baste before these lazy smaiks come up?—haud the rein easy—dinna let him swerve—now, haud the stirrup—that will do, man, and now we are on terra firma." So saying, without casting an eye on his assistant, gentle King Jamie, unsheathing the short, sharp hanger (*couteau de chasse*), which was the

only thing approaching to a sword that he could willingly endure the sight of, drew the blade with great satisfaction across the throat of the buck, and put an end at once to its struggles and its agonies.

Lord Glenvarloch . . . turned the slaughtered deer upon its back, . . . while the King, . . . having made a cross cut, so as to ascertain the depth of the fat upon the chest, exclaimed, in a sort of rapture, "Three inches of white fat on the brisket!—prime—prime—as I am a crowned sinner—and deil ane o' the lazy loons in but mysell! Seven—aught—aught tines on the antlers. By G—d, a hart of aught tines, and the first of the season! Bash and Battie, blessings on the heart's-root of ye! Buss me, my bairns, buss me." The dogs accordingly fawned upon him, licked him with bloody jaws, and soon put him in such a state that it might have seemed treason had been doing its full work upon his anointed body. "Bide down, with a mischief to ye—bide down, with a wanion," cried the King, almost overturned by the obstreperous caresses of the large stag-hounds. "But ye are just like ither folks, gie ye an inch and ye tak an ell.—And wha may ye be, friend?" he said, now finding leisure to take a nearer view of Nigel, and observing what in his first emotion of silvan delight had escaped him,—“Ye are nane of our train, man. In the name of God, what the devil are ye?”—*The Fortunes of Nigel*, ch. xxvii.

82. Essential Features.—Unlike Description and Narration, which deal with impressions, with perceptions and sensations, Exposition deals with thoughts. The writer who is expounding gives, not the image of an object or a movement, but the survey of a subject. Hence the following essential features:

1. Clear Thinking.—The writer is to view the subject in all its bearings, to estimate the exact value of each part for the whole. This adjustment of the parts to the whole is illustrated in Burke's statement¹ of the six "capital causes" which produced the intense American spirit of liberty. These causes were descent: popular form of government; religion in the North; slavery in the South; education; remoteness from England. All these causes were operative, therefore no one could be omitted; but Burke did not treat them with equal fulness. The paragraph length (in approximate number of words) varies thus: 432; 64; 336; 248; 320; 256. These

¹ In his speech on Conciliation.

figures indicate Burke's *estimate of what he needed for giving each successive paragraph-thought clearly and illustrating it fully.*

See §59; a carefully prepared outline is peculiarly helpful in exposition.

2. *Close Study.*—A good deal of faulty writing in school and in college is due to the writer's inability or unwillingness to study. The purpose of expository writing is to explain some subject to the reader, to make it clearer than it was before. To accomplish this result, the writer must be a thinker; to be a thinker, he must try to learn the truth, must master the subject so far as his training and opportunities permit. This implies study, conscious effort to master the facts and group them. In the strict sense, this is not "originality"; young persons are not likely to be original—nevertheless they ought to be able to learn what is commonly known or what commonly passes for fact. And even this process of merely assimilating and reproducing the known is original in a broad sense. The writer who has carefully thought out and reproduced a subject as it appears to him gives something which is at least fresh and worth reading.

Remember that understanding depends largely upon *the will to understand.*

3. *Avoidance of Exaggeration.*—Exposition is the presentation of the truth; now the truth needs no exaggeration. The writer who would explain must speak the truth calmly and clearly. In discussing the value of a certain historical personage, of a certain invention, do not represent this personage as the *greatest* man of his time, this invention as the most *wonderful*. Rather tell what the man did, what obstacles he overcame, how he influenced his fellow-men; tell exactly wherein the invention differs from others of the kind, what problems it solved. This advice is not superfluous; the young are proverbially apt to work themselves into a peculiar state of mind, in which they confound force with mere declamation; they believe that to be forcible they must use

strong words. In exposition, certainly, force and clearness are almost the same thing. To be forcible, one need but see the truth accurately and state it clearly. What could be more forcible than the following dignified presentation of a great physical phenomenon :

It may serve to impress upon us the fact of the sun's shrinkage, if we will remember that on that auspicious day when Queen Victoria came to the throne the sun had a diameter more than five miles greater than it had at the time when her long and glorious career was ended. The sun that shone on Palestine at the beginning of the present era must have had a diameter about one hundred and seventy miles greater than the sun which now shines on the sea of Galilee.

4. *Do not Confound Exposition with Argumentation.*—The young, when asked to write upon a subject in the line of a general statement, see § 80, are apt to fall into the error of supposing that they must *prove* something. This natural error is intensified by the present fashion of "debating," of taking sides upon a question under popular discussion. How much of lasting good may come from the fashion is a problem ; the danger lies in the fostering of a generation of glib talkers rather than of sound thinkers. At all events the art of mastering and presenting facts and principles suffers perceptibly from the undue cultivation of the art of debate.

For instance, a class in school or in college is directed to write a composition upon *The Policy of the United States in the Philippines* ; in all probability nine writers out of ten, perhaps even all ten, will immediately conceive it to be their duty to prove that the American treatment of the Filipinos is right or is wrong. What that policy actually *is*, no one will take the pains to learn. Yet the investigation of that policy step by step, the clear straightforward presentation of it, is the lesson most to be desired.

Let us suppose another subject to be *Forestry in America*. In all probability the writer will proceed to "contend" that the State ought to establish immediately schools of forestry and forest reservations. Yet it would be far more scientific to

learn exactly what forestry means, its possibilities in a given state, its peculiar significance for that state, its high development in France and Germany. To be able to treat such questions lucidly is a gift worth striving after.

Remember that if the object of all study is to learn, the perfection of learning is the art of presenting.

5. *Learn to Illustrate the Abstract by Means of the Concrete.*—All good writers are careful to make a general truth clear by means of an example. Note the concreteness of Hawthorne's language in the passages quoted in §§ 79, 80, the illustration by means of example in the Darwin passage, § 80, the concreteness of the arithmetical figures in the passage discussing the sun's shrinkage (in the present section), the concreteness of Macaulay's language, § 80. It has been aptly said: "Abstractions produce little or no effect until translated into concrete terms." If you have laid down a general truth, impress it upon the reader by means of an illustration, an individual case which may stand for the class. Among writers of science Huxley was, perhaps, the happiest in this gift of illustrating the abstract. Speaking of life as a succession of changes, of waste and restoration by means of the substance called protoplasm, he says:

For example, this present lecture, whatever its intellectual worth to you, has a certain physical value to me, which is, conceivably, expressible by the number of grains of protoplasm and other bodily substance wasted in maintaining my vital processes during its delivery. My *peau de chagrin*¹ will be distinctly smaller at the end of the discourse than it was at the beginning. By and by I shall probably have recourse to the substance called mutton, for the purpose of stretching it back to its original size. Now this mutton was once the living protoplasm, more or less modified, of another animal—a sheep. . . . A singular inward laboratory which I possess will dissolve a certain portion of the modified protoplasm; the solution so formed will pass into my veins; and the subtle influences to which it will then be subjected will convert the dead protoplasm into living

¹ The name of one of Balzac's stories in which "the hero becomes possessed of a magical wild ass's skin, which yields him the means of gratifying all his wishes."

protoplasm, and transubstantiate sheep into man.—*The Physical Basis of Life.*

The superiority of the concrete over the abstract is illustrated by comparing Burke with Brougham; both men are speaking on the same subject.¹

In all the despotisms of the East, it has been observed that the further any part of the empire is removed from the capital, the more do its inhabitants enjoy some sort of rights and privileges; the more inefficacious is the power of the monarch; and the more feeble and easily decayed is the organization of the government, etc. — BROUGHAM: *Inquiry*, etc.

In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt and Arabia and Curdistan, as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers, which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can.—BURKE: *Conciliation.*

83. Sequence.—In Narration the sequence is usually chronological; see § 67. In Description the sequence will, for the most part, depend upon the writer's impression; see § 74. In Exposition the sequence lies in the thought itself. We may even call this sequence "logical," provided we do not restrict the term logical to strict syllogistic deduction and induction, but include everything in the line of inference, suggestion, illustration, cause and effect. In any event, success turns upon the writer's ability to survey the subject in its entirety and assign each part to its proper place. There is no hastening to an end, as in narration; neither is there any selection of one detail to the exclusion of others, as in description. Each thought suggests the succeeding thought, sentence ought to follow sentence with a certain air of *inevitableness*. The general movement is deliberate, equable, uniform rather than rapid, implying that the writer has *forecast the whole*. The general tone should be calm, at least free from excitement. Sentences may be long or short. A short trenchant sentence is best for the utterance of an abstract

¹ Payne, *Burke's Select Works*, i., p. xxxix.

truth or a general fact ; a long sentence is good for expanding and illustrating, or for special modification. But, whether long or short, the sentences should fit into one another with the greatest possible ease and precision.

Hence the peculiar value of Echo, §§ 48, 49, and Repeated Structure, § 50, in exposition. In narrative and description the rapidity of the movement and the singleness and intensity of the impression are usually able of themselves to carry the reader along. Whereas in abstract thinking the reader's mind needs the mechanical aid of repetition to pass from point to point with "as little friction as possible." What is said in § 45 of the paragraph is most emphatically true of exposition as a whole.

Of connectives, § 51, it is to be observed that exposition is their especial field ; in fact, good expository writing without their aid is not always possible. They should be used freely, yet with the most careful discrimination, to mark every shading off and transition of thought.

The following extract illustrates the general calmness of tone of expository writing, the evident desire to present the subject from all sides, the gift of making the abstract concrete, the inevitableness of movement from point to point. These points are : that the ancient languages and literatures must be left to the élite ; so also must the modern, for all literature is culture, whereas language in itself is not culture.

The future towards which we are rapidly tending may already be seen in the distance. Latin and Greek will be given up for ordinary schoolboys, both in England and France, but the study of them will be maintained by a small *élite*. This *élite* will have a better chance of existence in England, where superiorities of all kinds are not only tolerated but respected, than it can have in France, where the modern instincts all tend to the formation of an immensely numerous, half-educated middle class. When the classical literatures shall be pursued as the fine arts are now, by their own elect, and not imposed on every incapable schoolboy, they will be better studied and better loved. Now, with regard to modern languages I have no illusions left. You cannot convert a Philistine into a lover of good literature by teaching him a foreign tongue. If he did not love it in his own language,

he is not likely to take to it in another. Every man has his own intellectual level, and on that level he will remain, whatever language you teach him. To make a Frenchman appreciate Milton or Spenser, it is not enough to teach him English; you would have to endow him with the poetic sense, with the faculty that delights in accompanying a poet's mind,—in a word, with all the poetic gifts except invention. Neither are all men fit to read noble prose. Minds incapable of sustained attention read newspaper paragraphs in English, and in French they would still read newspaper paragraphs. What I mean is that languages do not elevate the mind, they merely extend the range of its ordinary action. Teach a French gossip English and she will gossip in two languages; she will not perceive the futility of gossiping. This explains the poor and mean use that is constantly made of modern languages by many who have acquired them, and the remarkable unanimity with which such people avoid every great author, and even all intelligent intercourse with foreigners, reading nothing and hearing nothing that is worth remembering.—P. G. HAMERTON, *French and English*, ch. ii.

Compare also the passages from Burke and Matthew Arnold, § 76.

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